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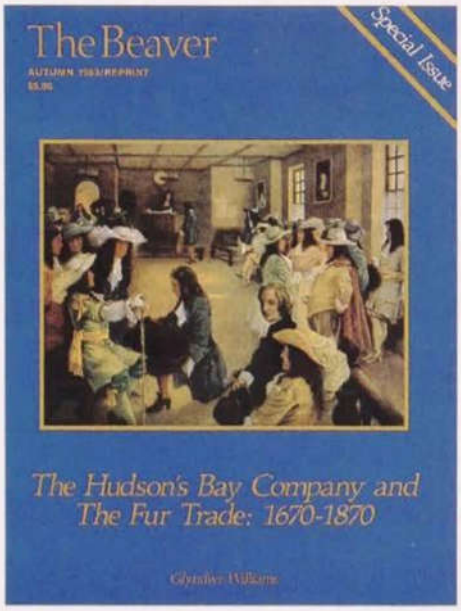

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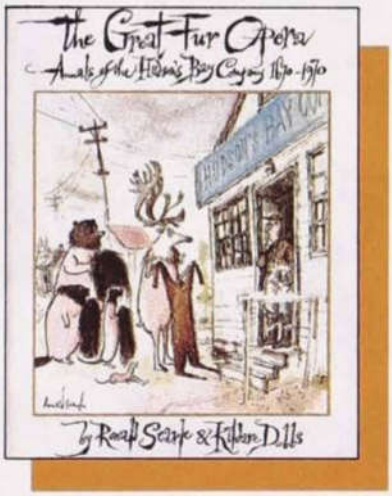

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Pope and Czar on the North Saskatchewan

By Margaret Stobie
Illustrations by Jan Kamienski

There was great jubilation when the Most Reverend Bishop Tikhon, leader of the Greek Orthodox Russian Church in North America, arrived in the settlement of Wostok, North-West Territories, 31 August 1901.

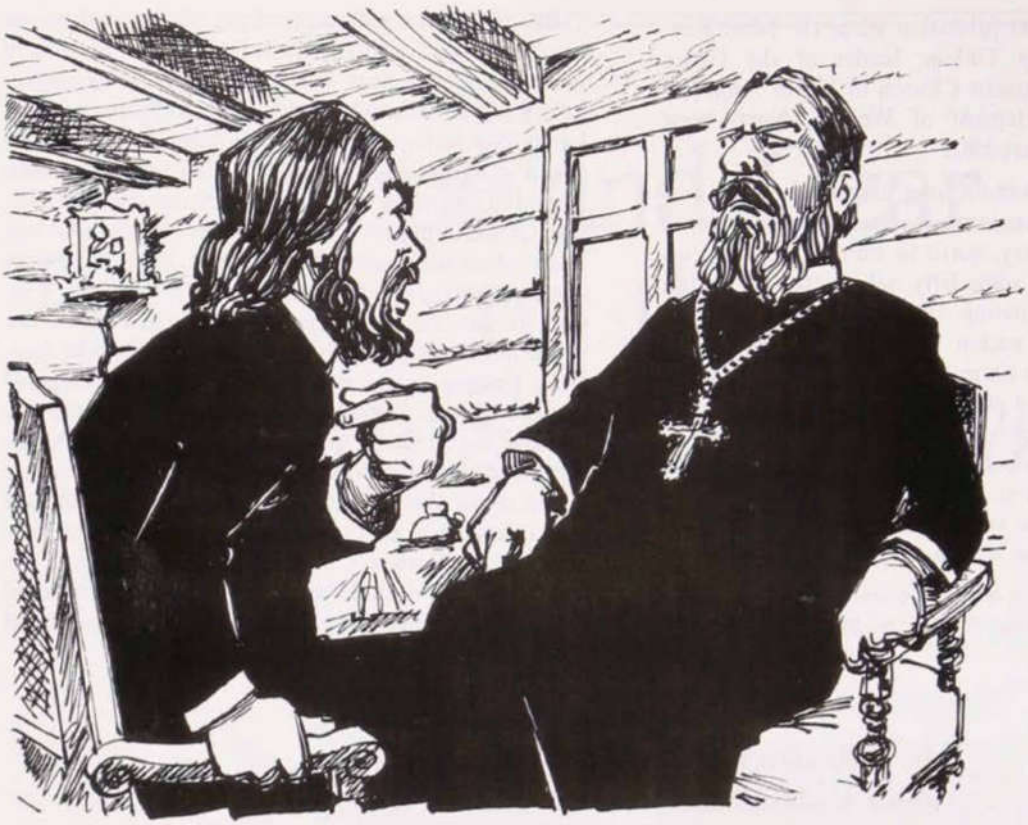
The bishop had come a long journey from his residence in San Francisco, by train to Seattle, to Vancouver, to Calgary, north to Edmonton, and then by horse and buggy some fifty miles east over prairie trails roughly paralleling the North Saskatchewan River. Wostok was within the large area occupying forty townships each six miles square where the Canadian government had placed the immigrants — 7,000 of them now — from Austria's province of Galicia. That province had been fashioned, following eighteenth-century treaties, from parts of Poland. In the new land the people were known generally as Galicians, those from the Russian part as Ruthenians.

Bishop Tikhon had come to consecrate three of the mushrooming new churches, hand-built by their congregations, on free land and with free timber granted by the Canadian government. Wostok's Holy Trinity was the largest of the three — some said it was the largest church in Alberta at the time — a handsome building with a fine cupola in which the unaccompanied singing of the whole congregation echoed and re-echoed with splendid sonority. The consecration took place on Sunday, 8 September and a "contributed" report of it appeared in the Edmonton *Bulletin* of 16 September. Bishop Tikhon, in magnificent robes of white and gold, led the procession around the church, which concluded the ceremony. Behind him came the resident priest, Father Korchinsky, who sprinkled holy water on the walls; the bishop's deacon who carried the censer; and the other attendants and acolytes, the vestments of the retinue making a ribbon of bright colour against the browns and greys of the wooden church. Similar ceremonies were held on the two following days in the small churches to the east and to the south of Wostok. At each of the consecrations, Bishop Tikhon in his sermons praised the people for remembering that they were Russian, and for "returning to your grandfather's" religion — *Pravoslavny* (True Faith or Orthodoxy).

But all was not radiance and joy. The special reason for the bishop's visit lay six miles west of Wostok in the settlement of Star, where the log church (congregation 300) was empty and locked. Religious conflict had broken out among the Ruthenians of the new Galicia, and Father Korchinsky, Wostok's priest, had been named in a lawsuit. The bishop declared that the Russian Greek Orthodox Church was being slandered and its members were accused "of trying to bring the people of this country to swear allegiance to the Czar of Russia". It was the same accusation that had led to the proscription of that church in old Galicia, for the Austrian Empire would not tolerate a second temporal power within its boundaries. A compromise had established a distinctive branch of the Russian church, the United Greek Catholic Church or Uniates, which accepted the Pope of Rome as spiritual head and paid him tithes while retaining some of the rites and doctrines of the Eastern Church. Those who clung to the old faith had been bitter, and when they came to Canada they broke away from the Uniates, repudiated the compromise, and built their own churches in what one of them called "the land of no musts".

In 1901 devout Christians at Star, Alberta, came to blows at church on Easter Sunday. The resulting legal battle dragged on for years.

There were plenty of obstacles, though. When, in 1898, the trustees of the Star congregation went to the Land Office in Edmonton to get title to the land that had been promised them, they were dismayed to discover that Bishop Legal, co-adjutor to Bishop Grandin of St. Albert and known as "the French Bishop", had already made entry for the land and had paid the registration fee for it in the name of Bishop Grandin, who now held title to it, and whose huge diocese surrounded the whole settlement. The Edmonton Land Agent wrote in haste to the Department of the Interior: "This land is not intended to go to the Catholic Church, but to the members of the Greek Catholic Little Russian denomination who are settled in this vicinity. . . . They were very deeply concerned over the fact that it was proposed to hand this land over absolutely to the Roman Catholic Church; they insist on having entire control in their own hands". The Department wrote Bishop Grandin, Bishop Grandin "relinquished all claim thereto", and the certificate of title was issued to the three trustees on 6 July 1899. The $10 fee was returned to Bishop Grandin.



"Oh, I am Greek Catholic too!"

The confusion of the Roman Catholic officials as to property rights (the Polish Galicians were, of course, traditionally Roman Catholic) was thus clarified, but the problem of the Greek Catholics was another matter. The same log church at Star, formerly Edna, formerly Limestone Lake, the same title deed and the same three trustees became the focus of the outbreak of long-smoldering bitterness between the two Russian sects, the Uniates and the Orthodox. The trustees, Mikel Pulizchy, John Pylypiw, and John Melnyk, keepers of the money-box, the key of the church, and the land title deed, were declared by the Land Registry to be "owners in fee simple" of the forty acres designated for the church and for the priest's house and farm. They were all Russian Greek Orthodox.

Yet many of the congregation were Uniates, and shortly some of them received a letter from the Apostolic missionary enquiring about their plans for a priest. Correspondence followed with Father John Zacklinski, then stationed in the eastern United States, who was directed by the Vatican to do missionary work in Canada. A contract was sent him, signed by twenty-four members of the Star congregation, including the three trustees, offering him $2.00 a year from each family, as well as church fees. He accepted, arrived in Star 15 July 1900, and took charge of the church.

However, as soon as the Orthodox members realised that Zacklinski was following tenets and doctrines of the Roman Church, they appealed to their bishop, and so Father James Korchinsky arrived from Alaska in mid-November.

In January 1901, in the outer world, the old queen died and she was succeeded by her aging son, Edward VII.

Within Star, little incidents began to occur. The Uniates charged that the treasurer's children were taking money from the church money-box, the Orthodox trustees delayed a marriage that Zacklinski was to perform by withholding the key. On 10 February 1901, according to Zacklinski's later affidavit, the two priests met in a private home. "I said to him, 'You are of the Russian Orthodox Church, and we are Catholic. You have nothing to do with our church'. He replied, 'Oh I am Greek Catholic too'." The two then forbade each other to conduct services in the church, each called the other a liar, and the meeting ended in a draw.

The two sides drew up in battle array. Zacklinski's group chose Charles de Wolf MacDonald of Edmon-

ton, Crown Prosecutor, as their advocate, and Korchinsky and the trustees chose the firm of Short and Cross, also of Edmonton. MacDonald took his charges to the Land Titles Office, only to be told that the others held the title and could deny access to the building, whereupon MacDonald issued a *caveat* on 15 March forbidding "the registration of any transfer or other instrument until the *caveat* is withdrawn by the caveators". A reply came on the same day from Short and Cross for the defendants, "the only appointed trustees of the Orthodox Greek Catholic Church, and have been from the beginning of the existence of that body as a church at Limestone Lake. They were the prime movers in the getting of the land allotted to that Church, and in the building of a Church for the worship of their religion. They sought for and got a priest of their own denomination in the person of Father Korchinsky. . . . We do not wish at this time to say more than that if you desire to issue any writ in the matter, we are instructed to accept service".

On 6 April, MacDonald for Zacklinski went back to the Clerk of Court with a Statement of Claims of nine items and a summary: "A declaration that the lands and the above mentioned church thereon are the property of the congregation of the Greek Catholic Church at Star aforesaid and not of the Russian Orthodox Church". Included were "an order that the defendants deliver up to the plaintiffs the said certificate of title, the key of the said church and the sum of $59.55", and also, "A perpetual injunction restraining the defendant Rev. Iwan Korchinsky from conducting services in said church according to the tenets, faith, rites, and ceremonies of the Russian Orthodox Church or at all". A final shot: $5,000 damages.

MacDonald recorded that on 6 April 1901, "I commenced this action" and the cause was set down for trial. The lawsuit thus begun continued for nearly seven years, to January 1908, as the little log church at Star was elevated by appeal after appeal from Court to Court until it reached the highest judiciary in the British Empire, the King's Privy Council in London.

Action was not limited to lawyers and their offices. At Star, the churchyard erupted. Zacklinski testified that he went to the church about 6 o'clock on the morning of Easter Sunday, "which was after the commencement of this suit", and found a large number of his supporters already there. Korchinsky came later with about twenty people and protected by a sergeant and two constables of the North West Mounted Police. Zacklinski said, "The police told me that I must not enter the church as the opposite party held the patent for the land, and I and my people must stand outside the fence. I told the police that I would divide the people, and they should see who held the majority. . . . I then read morning prayers to my people, and the police escorted Father Korchinsky to the church door, moving the people to do so, and he then tried to read his prayers".

But Korchinsky was shouted down. Cries came ringing through the centuries from the Christian schism of 1054 when the Church split into Eastern (Greek) and Western (Roman). Zacklinski's people shouted "We want no Orthodox, no Schismatic here!" and Korchinsky's people cried, "No popery! No tithes!" The police locked the church door and escorted Korchinsky back through the mob to safety.

When they had gone, the fight started. Stones flew, clods of frozen earth flew, women and children screamed from the sidelines, men grappled in the middle. Beards were torn, hair was pulled, blood began to mix with mud, the fine Sunday clothes were in tatters. There was no service on that Easter morning in the church at Star.

Still, it was spring and the land was coming alive again. Pussy-willows and crocuses were appearing, men and boys were ploughing and seeding, freshening the buildings with whitewash, and planning community buying of farm machinery for the fall. Women and girls were cleaning house, airing the winter bedding, and planting vegetables in the kitchen gardens. Several farmers fashioned rafts and brought loads of supplies down the river from Edmonton. The *Bulletin* reported that on 6 May a dozen of the men, their crops in, crossed the river for work on the railroad, which brought in much needed cash.

The liveliest activity, however, was on the road from Star to Edmonton, for the lawsuit was quickening too, and MacDonald was calling in witnesses to support Zacklinski's claims with affidavits. Their records varied little. They were farmers, Ruthenians from Galicia in the Austrian Empire. They had been in Alberta for from two to seven years, a couple a year or so longer.

One group of ten had come over together four years ago, a number were from the same village, and there were others too who had known each other in "the old country". Most had helped build the church. One noted that it was built of spruce logs which they cut down where they could find them. An affluent man said, "I personally contributed the sum of $18 in cash and 13 days lumbering in the woods". More commonly the contribution was $2.00 cash and two or three days labour. Only three or four could read or write in any language; the others signed with the customary "His Mark".

Short and Cross had been busy too, and on 7 May they sent MacDonald the statement of Korchinsky's defence: he was lawfully appointed and duly authorized by his Bishop to accept the invitation of the Russian Orthodox members at Star to be their priest. He had never required the members or adherents of the congregation to swear all allegiance to the Czar of Russia or in any way to transgress the law of the land; and he denied that he at any time "took away or misapplied any personal property whatsoever of the said Greek Catholic Church at Limestone Lake".

Accompanying Korchinsky's defence was a statement of fourteen items from the other defendants: "These defendants are the lawful trustees of the said congregation, nor have the moneys, keys, properties, or affects ever been lawfully out of their hands since the inception of the said congregation. ... These defendants never at any time ceased to be members or adherents of the Greek Catholic Church, nor is the Russian Orthodox Church any other than the Greek Catholic Church but is one and the same Church". Moreover, the plaintiffs who claimed to be trustees "never were elected as such by the said congregation, or otherwise howsoever, nor were they ever managers of the said congregation".

The counter-thrust came from MacDonald the next day: "The plaintiffs say, 'They join issue'. The plaintiffs declared that 'the Greek Catholic Church and the Russian Orthodox Church are entirely different bodies and have no connection with one another ecclesiastically or otherwise'. They declared further that 'the Pope is the Spiritual head of the Greek Catholic Church and the Czar of Russia is the Spiritual head of the Russian Orthodox Church, and the said defendant Korchinsky did require the members of said congregation to swear fidelity and obedience to the Czar of Russia as head of that Church".

Also on 8 May, MacDonald sent a Notice of Motion to Alex Taylor, Deputy Clerk of the Supreme Court of the North-West Territories, Edmonton, "for an Order that the plaintiffs have leave to set this cause down for trial at the sitting of this Honorable Court in Edmonton commencing on the 14th day of May instant". By early June, MacDonald had 29 affidavits which he sent to Chief Justice Charles B. Rouleau at Calgary asking for an interim injunction preventing Korchinski *et al* from using the church at Star. Rouleau granted the injunction "until after the trial of this action or until further order of the Court". The church was now closed to all worshippers.

In Edmonton, the Deputy Clerk issued a summons to the participants, appointing Thursday, 13 June, in his office for "examination for discovery" of the first named three defendants and three plaintiffs. Taylor sat as examiner.

The Edmonton *Bulletin* (19 June) took notice: "A dispute over the right of possession of the Galician church at Star is being heard before the Clerk of Court, and evidence of witnesses of both sides is being taken. Rev. Korchinsky on behalf of the Greek Orthodox claims the church is the property of his congregation. Rev. Zacklinsky of the Greek Catholic United Church claims it for his flock".

Proceedings began with the examination of Korchinsky. He was born, not in Galicia but in Russia, he was a member of the Greek Catholic Orthodox Church, and he had been ordained as priest by the Bishop of Alaska and the Aleutians. "My church does not recognise the Czar of Russia as head of our Church. The head is Jesus Christ".

Korchinsky gave an outline, later confirmed by witnesses and agreed to by both advocates, of the main differences in creed between the Orthodox and the Uniate Churches. The first denied and the second upheld four chief dogmas:

- The infallibility and supremacy of the Pope.
- The immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary.
- Purgatory.
- The procession of the Holy Ghost from the Father and from the Son, the Orthodox creed holding that the procession was from the Son only.

Otherwise, the Eastern priesthood were allowed to marry, and "the Eastern Churches generally use different rites, ceremonies, vestments, and calendar from the Roman Catholic Church. There is no doubt that in America, my Church and the (Uniate) Church are separate".

Questioned about his recent experiences, Korchinsky said that he had come to Alberta in November 1900 and had found a large church in process of construction at Wostok, for which his superior, Bishop Tikhon who had ordered him here, held title, having given money towards it. He met Father Zacklinski for the first time in Edmonton, 22 January 1901.

Shortly after, Star parishioners began to come to Korchinsky for the sacraments. He told them to go to their own priest. "We have no priest", they said, and they complained that Zacklinski "was more on the Latin side than on the Greek side". Korchinsky told

"Cries came ringing through the centuries from the Christian schism of 1054 . . ."

them that they must renounce Roman Catholic doctrine before he could serve them, and he estimated that 190 people did so. Korchinsky's account of the meeting of the two priests differed little from Zacklinski's except in emphasis: "Zachlinski said to me, 'You are of the Russian Orthodox Church and we are Greek Catholics. You have nothing to do with our church'. To this I replied, 'I am Greek Catholic but you are not. You are Roman Catholic' ". Korchinsky was ordered to bring to court a list of all members of the Star congregation who had renounced Roman Catholic doctrine.

Zacklinski was called up. He said that on instructions from MacDonald, he had given notice in church of a meeting to be held about church finances, for there was a shortage of $200.00 in receipts and $20.00 in cash. "A very small amount", Zacklinski said, "and that was the only trouble; they had no objections to my going to the Roman Catholic Bishop at St. Albert". He then began to go into matters of doctrine, and he went back to the division between East and West. "Four or five centuries ago the Russians of Galicia were all of the Orthodox Greek Church. . . ."

MacDonald objected. "This is only testing the witness's recollection of history. It does not bear upon the suit".

However, Zacklinski continued recounting the compromise that the bishops had agreed to and noting, "The Orthodox Church is strongly opposed to both the Roman and the Uniate churches because of their creed, also strongly opposed to the claim of authority of the Pope". Apparently some of the congregation were too:

"They asked me if I got any help from the Bishop of St. Albert. I said I never got a cent from them, but they offered me money to go back to the States — Bishop Legal did this".

Zacklinski had reorganized the church committee, replacing the three trustees with twelve provisors, whom he asked to take an oath of office. They refused to do so. He did not threaten to leave because only 40 out of 80 had paid his salary but he had many grievances: "They said I could buy on credit at the store, but when I went to buy blankets, credit was refused. Blankets that had been loaned me were taken away when I was not at home. I accused some of the trustees of stealing and they accused me of stealing. Two of them collected some money and spent it on this lawsuit".

Question: Were not the old trustees very energetic in getting the church built?

Answer: They did a lot of howling so as to get money from other people so they would not have to pay themselves. . . . They took $50.00 from the cash box and paid it on a threshing machine.

Asked about the Easter Sunday fracas, Zacklinski said, "I instructed my people to come to church at Star on Easter day because they all asked me if they could come. I don't know if they came expecting a row. I told Father Korchinsky that these people would come and make a mock of him. I heard after the police came there, they went and got stones; my man had a weapon too. Some man went around and said that there would be fifteen dead people".

Speaking directly to MacDonald, he said, "Before the trouble about the church money, I was good friends with the old trustees".

Having dealt with the two principals, the examiner called two minor witnesses on Saturday, 15 June. William Cross began the questioning of Paulo Pasemko — "What do you bring this suit for? What claim do you make against the defendant?" — to which MacDonald kept up constant objections, so that when he came to question the witness about the provisors, Pasemko revealed not only his own confusion, but also the chaos in the congregation: "I do not know which row you mean". Thereafter, his replies were, "I don't know— I never heard—I don't know— I do not understand the rules of my church government". But he was sure of why he was there. "I want to be one of the trustees of the church at Star. I want it because I want to work for the congregation. I don't want any money".

The other witness that morning, Petro Melnyk, was more informative. He had been in the country seven years, he belonged to the Uniate Church and accepted all the creed: "I belong to Rome". But when the "French bishop" at St. Albert wanted to get the land, he along with all the rest of the congregation objected. "It was [Member of Parliament] Frank Oliver who got us this land. . . . There was a meeting at Oliver's office, and they were allowed to cut all the logs they wanted". And so an avenue to Ottawa was opened up through Frank Oliver, M.P.

About the provisors, Melnyk said, "I was at the meeting last fall when Father Zacklinski appointed provisors. He appointed twelve, and asked the twelve to swear to obey him in all things. Nobody swore. . . . The old trustees were not present when the new ones were appointed. They couldn't because they had a row with the priest".

Asked how many of the congregation stayed with the old trustees, he said, "About two or three hundred stay with the new trustees, only nine stay with the old. Some of the two or three hundred live fifteen miles away, some further". He said he couldn't tell Korchinsky's religion from his own "except that in the old country one was called Austria and one Russia".

When Korchinsky was called for cross-examination, he explained the organization of the Orthodox Church: "The governing body of my Church is the Holy Synod of Russia. It also governs my bishop. The Czar does not make appointments to the Holy Synod. As officers of the state they are appointed by the Czar, but as officers of the Church they are appointed by the Holy Synod. When a vacancy occurs in the Holy Synod, they submit names to the Czar and ask him which he is satisfied with, and the one he names is appointed. . . . My church is the Russian Greek Catholic Orthodox Church. The word Russian gives the nationality, Greek Catholic is used to show that it belongs to the Eastern, not the Western rite, and Orthodox gives the denomination of the Church".

In answer to other questions he said, "I asked for police on Easter Sunday to protect me. I claim I have a right to go there and hold services. If the law will show me that I have not the right, after that I will not claim the right".

It had been apparent for some time that this action was not a small affair of two minor sects quarreling over a log church in the wilderness. It had become a matter of concern in ecclesiastical circles in Rome, in Austria, and in Russia. It was important to the Cana-

dian government that all care be taken to establish the religious jurisdiction, rights, and claims of the immigrants who were pouring into the country by the thousands.

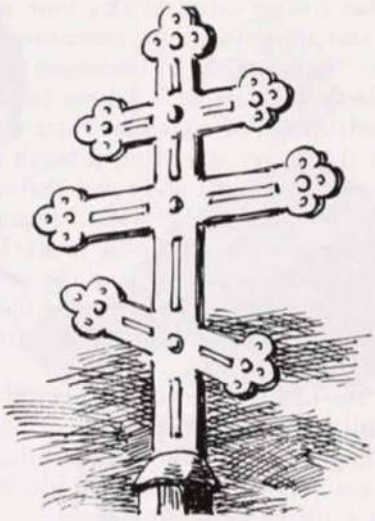
When Court resumed after the Dominion Day celebrations, the surrounding and imposing presence of the Roman Catholic Church appeared in the person of Emile J. Legal, the "French" bishop, co-adjutor of the St. Albert diocese. He was very clear about lines of authority. The land of "no musts" was not his land: "In Galicia there are three kinds of Catholics that follow the Roman Catholic, all under the spiritual headship of the Pope and subject to the Vatican. In Lemberg [Lwow of Poland] the capital city of Galicia, there are three Archbishops, Roman Catholic, Greek Catholic, and Armenian, or as they were sometimes called, Catholics of the Latin rite, the Greek rite, and the Armenian rite. . . . The laws of our Church require that any body of Greek Catholics in a diocese or country where there is no Bishop of the Greek rite or Greek Catholic Bishop, shall be subject to the jurisdiction of the Roman Catholic Bishop of the Latin rite of the diocese. . . . In America there is no Catholic bishop of the Greek rite, or Greek Catholic Bishop, and it is the duty of every Roman Catholic Bishop according to the laws of his Church to claim and exercise jurisdiction over every body of Greek Catholics in his diocese".

Learning in 1897 of a large body of Greek Catholic or Uniates at Limestone Lake who were without a priest, Legal visited them "only to exercise my jurisdiction over them" and held meetings, to one of which Rev. Father Nestor Dymytrow came. "He had brought me his proper credentials and had been by me authorised to officiate as priest . . . He held services in my presence according to the Greek rite in the schoolhouse, and the pastoral benediction was pronounced by myself as bishop".

In the same spirit, Legal applied to the Department of the Interior for a grant of land for Star in the name of "La Corporation Episcopale Catholique Romaine at St. Albert" and he asked the Vatican to send a suitable priest. "Father Tymkiewicz arrived and reported himself to me as his spiritual superior, and was by me duly authorised to act as priest. . . . I left Alberta a day or two later on a trip to Europe". Tymkiewicz stayed only about five months, and Edna or Star was again without a priest until Father Zacklinski came, sent by the Apostolic delegate appointed by the Vatican. Again, Legal authorised him to act as priest at Star. There was no trouble until Korchinsky came "who, I am informed, is a priest of the Russian Orthodox Church, a body called by my Church Schismatic".

On cross-examination, Bishop Legal said that he had his historical information from the thirty volumes of the *General History of the Roman Catholic Church*. He did not know other authorities cited in challenge. He did not know when the Christian Church began to use the word "catholic", but "I deny the use of that word to the Eastern Church separated from Rome because they are limited in time and space. I claim for my Church the sole right of the designation. . . . I deny that the Uniates objected to unite with Rome. I deny that they did unite only under compulsion". Asked "What do you think is Catholic", he said "The Universal Catholic Church. The Roman Catholic is the universal use of the word catholic".

As for the two principals, Zacklinski, "at present in Edmonton, about to leave for Manitoba for a few weeks



to minister there", made a second affidavit at MacDonald's request, substantiating, explaining, refuting items of evidence, and verifying translations and account entries (one entry was, "Czar believers — $122.00") and then he went his way. Korchinsky was busy with plans for Bishop Tikhon's visit and the consecration of three Orthodox churches, one of them evidence of striking achievement, the three of them equally striking evidence of the numbers of Orthodox adherents within the Galician community. It was time for a definite assertion.

The world at large was shocked by the assassination of President McKinley, who died of gunshot wounds in a hospital in Buffalo on 14 September 1901. Theodore Roosevelt succeeded as President of the United States.

The Star lawsuit went on. At the end of November, two more trustees were called to make affidavit at the office of the Deputy Clerk of Court in Edmonton. The

first was the presenter, Nicole Spaczinski, a central figure who led the congregation in singing. Because he was literate, he had been authorized to conduct certain parts of the service, and he had also been appointed by Father Dymytrow as secretary of a committee of five to raise money and build a church. On the following Russian Christmas, 6 January, he gathered a group together and led them in singing Christmas songs and gathering money as they went through the community. "As presenter, I attended every service during that time. The three lay defendants were regular attendants and regularly joined in singing the Creed of the Greek Catholic Church . . . We have nothing against the other people except that we are not under the Czar and don't want to be".

The other trustee called at this time was Nicole Polushie, also appointed to the committee by Father Dymytrow: "Born in Galicia, I belonged to the Greek Catholic Orthodox Church, I did not know anything about a Uniate Church in Galicia. There was only one church in the village. I call my Church in Galicia *provo-slavny* because the priest said that word when he elevated the Host in the Mass. I thought Father Zacklinski was a Greek Orthodox priest. During the time I went to his church, I sang the service as he said; and if it's another presenter, I sing the service as he says, because I can neither read nor write. I don't know which way's which".

As for the title deed to the church, at the Land Office "Billy Polushie interpreted. I heard Billie speaking English. I have heard the Certificate of Title read; my son Wasyl read it to me in Russian. It read the Greek Catholic Orthodox Church. . . . When we built that church, we built it for a Greek Catholic Orthodox Church".

By the spring of 1902 nothing had gone forward except the gathering and shaping of evidence. In an affidavit of March, MacDonald pointed out the difficulties of far-flung justice when plaintiffs and witnesses lived near Star, fifty miles from Edmonton. "Owing to my being constantly occupied in the discharge of my duties as Crown Prosecutor, I have been unable to consult", though consultation would be necessary "previous to taking steps to get the attendance of witnesses". A similar tone came a month later from William Short. He had found some errors in the copies of Korchinsky's defence, "I was very busy at the time with the spring sitting and didn't notice the mistake. . . . I misunderstood in the first place because he speaks and understands English imperfectly". Short asked approval of corrections of the errors.

Both advocates were growing restive, but MacDonald was in a peculiarly awkward situation in that his chief plaintiff, Father Zacklinsky, had virtually disappeared. When he left for Manitoba the previous July, he had promised to return and to keep in touch, but since then MacDonald had had only one letter, no word about him, and his address was unknown. "Members of the Congregation, Bishop Legal and others, as well as the Secretary to His Grace the Metropolitan Archbishop of Lemberg, head of the Greek Catholic Church, all say Zacklinski doesn't intend to return. Another Greek Catholic priest is to be sent out from Galicia". MacDonald asked for permission to use Zacklinski's affidavits as evidence, and he also asked that "the cause be set for a special day" giving him time to consult with distant participants. On the other hand, Short and his clients were heartened when on 26 May, a bill was passed in Parliament "to incorporate the Bishop of the Orthodox Russian Greek Catholic Church of North America and the Aleutian Islands". They now had solid authority behind them, they could not be buffeted about. Bishop Tikhon's visit was translated into substance.

Finally there was progress. The action was tried without a jury before the Hon. Mr. Justice D.L. Scott in his Chambers at Edmonton. The trial began on 16 May 1902, continued another six days in May, was held over to October and heard for seven days, was held over to January 1903 for ten days of hearings, held over to April for four days, held over to July for four days, one more day on 4 September 1903, thirty-three days in all. Judgment was filed in writing 9 January 1904.

Scott's judgment was a lengthy and careful review of the interwoven issues revealed in the course of the trial. The bare claim about property rights as between the two groups expanded immediately into matters of dogma, titles, organization, precedence. To the question: "Who owns the name of Greek Catholic?" Scott concludes that the two sides are equally entitled to it. As to organization, he says, "The head of the Uniate Church in Galicia is the Archbishop of Lemberg, who is subject only to the Pope". While, ignoring Korchinsky's plea, he says, "The head of the Orthodox Church is the Czar of Russia and under him is what is known as 'The Holy Synod' ". Scott follows Legal's argument about the relationships of the Catholic Churches in Austria, and says that since there is no Uniate Bishop in North America, Uniate priests report to the Roman Catholic bishop of the diocese.

As for the case at Star, Scott reports the comings and goings of priests of various denominations, including the two-year hiatus when the presenter, Spaczinski, held services, and says, "It is impossible for me to believe that they [the defendants] could have attended the services of Father Dymytrow, Tymkiewicz, and Zacklinski, extending over a period of four years, and have remained during the whole of that period in ignorance of the fact that the services were those of the Uniate Church and not of the Orthodox Church". Further to that point, Scott asks, "If they were Ortho-

"We have nothing against the other people except that we are not under the Czar and don't want to be . . ."

dox, why didn't they apply to the Orthodox bishop in the years when they were without a priest?"

The defendants relied upon the permit to cut timber as documentary evidence that the church was theirs, for the permit read that "It was for the purposes of the Greek Orthodox Church", but Scott overrode that claim by saying that the agent had left the line blank before the word "Church". In the blank, written in pencil, were the words, "state whether Catholic or Greek Orthodox". Scott argues somewhat speciously that "It is not improbable that the applicants understood from these words that they must use either one of these names and no other; and as their church was a Greek Church they must use the latter name as being the nearest approach to the name by which their Church was known".

He concludes that from a consideration of all these elements, "The Plaintiffs are entitled to a declaration that the church and land belong to the Greek Catholic Church united with the Roman Catholic Church, or the United Greek Catholic Church, and are not the property of the Russian Orthodox Church". He further stipulates that the Uniates were entitled to an injunction forbidding Korchinsky from performing services in that church.

He reserved the question of costs until later, but noted a rider to all findings "Unless there is an appeal".

On Friday, 15 January 1904, six days after Scott had announced his judgment, the Edmonton *Bulletin,* somewhat prematurely, declared, "Russian Church Suit Ended. Begun 3 years ago last March by the Rev. Ivan Zacklinski . . . . against the Rev. James Korchinsky and three trustees in whom the title to the church was vested. The trial is one of the longest, if not the longest

"Their Lordships will humbly advise His Majesty that the appeal should be dismissed."

trial ever known in Canada. It ended in judgment in favor of the plaintiffs by the Hon. Mr. Justice Scott. The church belongs to the Greek Catholic Church of the Greek rite, with the Pope as head".

Toward the end of March, the Deputy Clerk of Court ordered the Orthodox trustees to deliver up the duplicate Certificate of Title, the key of the church, the cash box and $59.55 belonging to the United Greek Catholic congregation. Korchinsky, not wishing to be involved in litigation, had withdrawn from the action, and the plaintiffs would recover costs from the other defendants. "Permission is given to the plaintiffs to enter and make use of the church". After standing locked and empty since Easter 1901, the church once more had services on Easter Sunday, 10 April 1904.

It was a bustling year. Long distance phone service began between Calgary and Edmonton, the first "horseless carriage" appeared in Edmonton 16 May, and in Star with its Post Office, school, three stores, the hotel full, the blacksmith busy, and large quantities of farm machinery arriving from Edmonton, business was booming. In the fall elections, Laurier was returned with an increased majority, Oliver was re-elected and made Minister of the Interior the next April. Edmonton was declared a city (population 5,445) on 7 November.

Early in the year, the defendants in the Star case, this time the three trustees only, had appealed Scott's decision, and the Supreme Court of the North-West Territories issued its decision from Calgary on 18 January 1905. Three of the judges agreed with each other and with the Lower Court, and declared that the appeal should be dismissed with costs. But Chief Justice Arthur Lewis Sifton dissented, saying that a very large amount of evidence as to the different creeds and the various names of congregations was irrelevant, "the sole question being whether defendants are allowed to hold this land as against plaintiffs, upon whom lies the onus of proof, and I therefore hold that plaintiffs have failed to prove their case and the appeal should be allowed". However, the vote was three to one, and Scott's judgment was upheld. The Orthodox trustees and their advocate immediately applied to the Supreme Court of Canada for permission to appeal.

The two provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan came into being on 1 July 1905. The Canadian Northern Railway was completed in the fall, and the first Edmonton to Winnipeg train pulled out on 18 December at 24.01. On 3 July in Europe the 1905 Russian Revolution broke out.

On 26 February 1906, the Edmonton *Bulletin* again announced, again prematurely, "LONG LEGAL FIGHT ENDED. Supreme Court decision in the famous Church case. . . . Lower Courts gave judgment to the United Greek Church. . . . The Orthodox congregation went to Ottawa. They have got back the church that they built". The decision was again split, this time three to two, and MacDonald and the Uniates immediately applied to the King's Privy Council in London for permission to appeal the judgment. Permission was granted on 27 August.

The month of July was a month of disasters: Vesuvius erupted on 9 July, leaving 200 people buried in the ruins of the Naples market; on 18 July came the San Francisco earthquake, with a terrible loss of life.

The events in the outer world that most deeply stirred the new Galicia were those of the revolution in Russia where both Poles and Ruthenians still had strong ties. At first the news seemed to be good. At the end of March, in the first elections ever held in the Czar's domains, the Liberals had won, and the Parliament (Duma) opened 16 May. But the Liberals demanded immediate amnesty for political prisoners and the establishment of constitutional monarchy. The Czar refused the demands and refused to receive the delegates at St. Petersburg.

Riots began and the news grew worse. Sailors mutinied in Odessa, the army mutinied in St. Petersburg, there were peasant uprisings in Odessa and Kiev. By mid-July, the Czar's cabinet had resigned and Nicholas was trying to arrange a coalition. Strikes were spreading everywhere. In St. Petersburg, it was reported, "the police have entirely lost control, they are kicked and their uniforms torn off". Warsaw was in a state of siege. Parliament was dissolved by Imperial ukase, the final blow to the peasants' hopes. Mutineers were worsted at Kronstadt, soldiers refused to fire on peasants. By mid-August, there was "a war of terrorism from the Vistula to the German frontier" a sort of "St. Bartholomew's night in Poland".

The Czar made an effort at peace, saying that the government would divide land among the peasants. By 6 September, "Premier Stolypen will hold regular weekly receptions at the Winter Palace where he has his quarters. All persons will be admitted".

At Star new arrivals had tales of horror and foreboding. But the King's Privy Council, the highest judicial body in the empire, had been meeting in mid-July and again on 3 December of 1907 and they published their decision in January of 1908. Those present were: Lord Loreburn L.C., Lord MacNaughten, Lord Atkinson, Lord Collins, and Sir Arthur Wilson. Lord MacNaughten delivered the judgment of their lordships. In the course of his review, he notes the permit to cut timber "to be used in the erection of a church building for the mission of the Greek Orthodox Church, and for no other purpose. It seems to their lordships that sufficient weight has scarcely been given to this document, or to the testimony of the trustees when they went to St. Albert to retrieve their land and were told by an elderly priest, 'The tail cannot wag the cat, the head must be there to wag the tail'. They answered him bluntly, 'You are not our head and we are not your tail'." Lord MacNaughten also referred to a key point that had been brought up by A.L. Sifton, the dissenting judge in the decision of the Supreme Court of the North-West Territories: "As Sifton, A.L., says in a judgment which is concise and to the point, 'Settlers in a remote district anywhere in this country with no settled pastor of their own, will attend occasional religious services, and give the most serious attention thereto, without in any way believing that they are prejudicing their own religious views' ".

In their lordships' conclusion to their argument, they say, "The appellants laid much stress on the undoubted fact that the congregation gladly accepted the ministration of Uniate priests. But then it must be remembered that there were no Orthodox priests in Galicia and that the Uniate priests who ministered to the congregation at Star were, or claimed to be, fellow countrymen, and professed to regard with little favour the pretensions of the Roman Catholic Bishop and his coadjutor. Besides there was no difference between the services of the Orthodox Church and those of the Uniate Church intelligible to persons in the position of the parties to this lamentable quarrel, or, indeed, noticeable by them until they were armed and instructed on the point for the purpose of the conflict or for the purpose of the trial.

"Their Lordships will humbly advise His Majesty that the appeal should be dismissed".

At last, the Edmonton *Bulletin* could report accurately that the long legal battle over the church at Star was ended. ♦

Margaret Stobie is the author of "The Other Side of Rebellion: The Remarkable Story of Charles Bremner and his Furs", NeWest Press, Edmonton, 1986.

Alexander Mackenzie's journey to the Arctic Ocean in the year 1789 was essentially a

Conducted Tour

But his tour guides, the local Indians, got very little credit for their assistance

By Michael Bliss

Much of our history-writing about the age of exploration and discovery is poisoned by ethnocentric bias. What kind of "discovery" is it when Englishmen or Scotsmen are guided through country known to and inhabited by North American natives? Most of the "exploration" of what is now Canada consisted of this kind of travelling: natives showed whites the routes they normally took through their territory. From a native point of view, the whites were confused, dependent visitors. "They were like lost children," the Dene leader William Erasmus told Prime Minister Brian Mulroney at a land transfer ceremony in 1988, "it was our people who took care of them".

The literature of exploration, written from the explorer's point of view, often masks this dependency by maximizing the hardships the whites endured and minimizing their contacts with and reliance upon natives. Travellers through uninhabited country — polar regions or the high seas — really were required to endure or perish on their own. We tend to generalize from their experience and assume that white voyagers in the North American "wilderness" were in the same predicament.

Consider one of the greatest of all North American travellers, Alexander Mackenzie. Two hundred years ago this summer he made his first epic journey, from Lake Athabasca to the Arctic Ocean, down the river history has named after him. Mackenzie is usually portrayed as a wilderness adventurer (as "Big Mack", for example, in Peter C. Newman's *Caesars of the Wilderness)*, who fearlessly led his men through a barren wasteland with no more than token help from frightened, confused, and unreliable Indians.

Read carefully, Mackenzie's *Journal of a Voyage from Fort Chipewyan to the Arctic Ocean in 1789* (all references in this text are from the version in W. Kaye Lamb, ed., *The Journals and Letters of Sir Alexander Mackenzie*. Toronto, Macmillan, 1970) discloses a very different trip. The journey to the Arctic was through inhabited territory, marked at times even by signposts. Mackenzie's party was led by several native guides, who exhibited rational concerns about the group's safety. The expedition was provisioned by native hunters and traders without whom the whites would probably have perished. Of course the whites relied on native technology, their bark canoes.

Mackenzie himself was more interested in the aboriginal people he met and the information they could give him than he was in the country he travelled through. Intrepid and resourceful as he certainly was (but also willing to use threats and violence), the European explorer was remarkably dependent on those who helped and watched him as he journeyed through their lands — the natives who gave him a conducted tour to the Arctic in 1789.

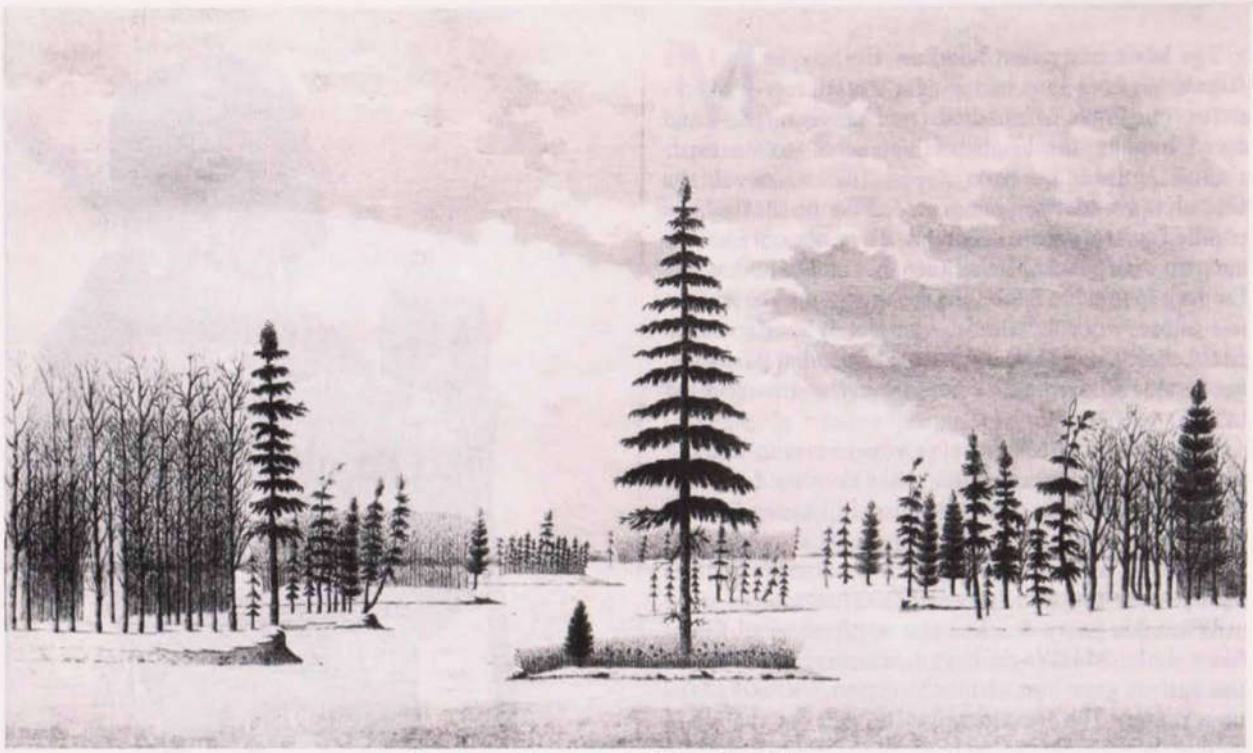
The basic party that left Fort Chipewyan on Lake Athabasca on 3 June consisted of six whites — Mackenzie, four French-Canadians, and one German — and seven Indians: the English Chief, who was an experienced guide, his two wives, two wives of the Canadians, and two young men. Five of the Indians paddled in two separate canoes. They not only had to keep up with Mackenzie's canoe, but had to hunt along the way to provide fresh food for the group; the women — whose work is almost completely neglected in Mackenzie's narrative — paddled, mended garments, made moccasins, and gathered berries, among other tasks.

The purpose of Mackenzie's voyage was to find out if the river system that Indians had described to Peter Pond could serve as a fur trade conduit to the Pacific. The first part of the route, from Athabasca to Great Slave Lake, was well-known; three families of Indians set out on it the same day as Mackenzie.

When his party reached the south shore of Great Slave Lake Mackenzie began recording information the natives gave him about the region, including portage routes. The travellers had to wait for the ice to go out; Mackenzie took advice on ice conditions from another Indian who was also waiting to cross the lake. He finally landed at Yellowknife Bay on the north shore on 23 June, where there was an encampment of six lodges of Yellowknife Indians. Mackenzie had "several Councils" with the natives, enquiring mainly about the river he was seeking. Finally he hired one of their young men to guide him to the entrance to the river and bought "a large new Canoe". On the 25th they left the village and headed into what for Europeans was unknown territory.

That first day in the great unknown they arrived at an island (Old Fort Island) which had been so heavily used by natives that its wood supply had been completely exhausted. Paddling along the north shore of Great Slave Lake, Mackenzie's party noticed abandoned lodges "Upon every part of the Land that we came near to". But it had been eight winters since their guide had visited the entrance to the river and he had trouble finding it. No one knew what to do except be angry at the guide ("the English Chief . . . wanted to shoot him for having undertaken to guide us in a Road he did not know"). When the opening was finally located on the 29th, the travellers were at the limit of the guide's knowledge and consequently, Mackenzie wrote, "at a loss what course to take". For one of the few times on the trip, they struck out blindly. Fortunately, they found a channel.

Mackenzie's journal contains dozens of entries about the native activity they encountered almost every day on the river. On 30 June his hunters found a goose that had recently been killed with someone else's arrow.



HBC Archives

Great Slave Lake as seen in 1771 by Samuel Hearne.

On 1 July they found old lodge poles on an island, probably from a Cree war excursion. Later that day they passed two more old encampments. On 2 July "We saw many of the Native Campments today some of them this Spring and others older." On 3 July Mackenzie, "accompanied by 2 Men and also Indians" climbed a high hill to try to see where he was. "I was very much surprised to find a Campment on Top of it. The Indians told me that it is the Custom of all the People who have no Arms to make choice of Places of this Kind for their residence, as they could easily make them inaccessible to their Enemies, particularly those who the Crees make War on, . . . We saw many of the Natives Encampments the Day . . .".

On the 5th the party actually saw "several Smokes, which we made for with all speed". Their arrival at a village of Slave and Dog Rib Indians near the mouth of the Great Bear River caused great consternation — from their Cree experience, if nothing else, the natives had a healthy suspicion of strangers — but Mackenzie's Indians landed first "and were very busy in reconciling them to our arrival". The residents received gifts from the travellers and were plied for information about the river below their village. Mackenzie took advantage of the occasion to try to hire a "new Conductor" (the first one is mentioned in his journal after they entered the river), offering various iron tools as advance payment.

When the time came to depart the new guide balked, for he had no real desire to travel into desolate, unfriendly territory. "We in a manner compelled him to embark", Mackenzie wrote. The fur trader was fascinated by these river-dwellers, and wrote much more detailed descriptions of their dress and customs ("their want of Modesty & their having no Sense of their Nakedness but from the Cold would make a Person think that they were descended from Adam") than he did of the land through which he passed.

After another day's paddling Mackenzie's party came on the most visibly populated stretch of the river. On 7-8 July they met six different parties of Slaves and Dog Ribs, groups of families numbering up to 35 in a camp. The natives were often skittish — Mackenzie was never sure how many more were hiding in the bush, and was told that he had passed many others without knowing it — but usually became friendly. They provided fresh fish and game to the strangers and often paddled a few miles with them to alert them to rapids and portage routes. Mackenzie gradually realized that his conductor's continued complaining arose from his fear of the warlike "Eskmeaux", whose territory he was afraid they were about to enter and who had killed a number of his relations.

The people of the river were subject to Cree raids from the south and Inuit attacks from the north. Mackenzie was travelling through what was effectively

a war zone. No wonder the natives were frightened and behaved in ways that whites would one day stereotype in the portrayal of jibbering native bearers in African safari movies. Mackenzie's hesitant conductor was perhaps not unlike a French guide being asked to lead a party of unbelievably ignorant foreigners into Germany in 1916. Mackenzie replaced him on the 8th with a third conductor, a Hare who proved just as uncertain. He deserted the first night, apparently with the help of relations who had followed the group.

Mackenzie believed he had to have the help of a native guide. So, he wrote, they "embarked one of the others against his will and took his paddles from the one that remained that he might not follow us, at which he that was in our Canoe got quite enraged, jumped at the Paddle threw it on shore, but we embarked it again and pacified him". Travellers who resort to kidnapping are surely mixing desperation with their intrepidity.

Mackenzie was as much on a tour of Athapascan cultures as he was a voyager through strange lands. On the next day, 9 July — he wrote a very long description of the party of 15 "Deguthee Dinees" (Kutchin or Loucheux Indians) they encountered — and who became friendly after the kidnapped conductor spoke to them. "We had a Mess of most delicious fish from them" and purchased some dressed animal skins. "They don't know what Beaver is", Mackenzie noted.

These border people did know about the river and the Eskmeaux, with whom they were sometimes at war but now in friendship. A confident — even cocky — new guide was engaged, who laughed at the fears of the upriver tribes ("that they were all like old Women & great Liars etc."), and displayed his qualifications to the whites by performing Inuit songs and dances. It was as though the party of Frenchmen had hired an Alsatian to lead them into Germany.

Two days and yet another encounter later with a group of natives — the tenth they had parleyed with — Mackenzie's party entered the river delta, and began passing old Inuit encampments. The further he led them into Eskmeaux territory and beyond the limits of his own knowledge of the terrain, the more nervous the guide became. As natives had warned Mackenzie earlier, game was much harder to find; his hunters were discouraged, and provisions were becoming a problem. He promised his men that they would go on for only 7 days more.

The delta country teemed with signs of native life and activity:

> **Saturday, July 11:** At 12 oClock we landed at a plain where we observed some of the Natives had been lately, I counted the places of upwards of 30 Fires and some of the Men went further where they saw many more. . . . There are a great No. of Poles stuck in the ground in the River to which they fastened their Nets . . . We found scattered round their fire places pieces of whalebone, very thick Leather . . . pieces of the Frames of their Canoes &C. We could observe where they had spilt Train Oil in several places. Close by was a Spruce Tree branched up to the Top as a Maypole. . . . At 4 oClock we landed at 3 Huts or Houses. . . . All day we expected that we should meet with some of the Natives. On several Islands we saw the print of their Feet on the Sand. . . .
>
> **Sunday, July 12:** At 10 oClock A.M. landed at 4 Huts, same as we saw yesterday . . . The Natives had lately been here, the Beach was covered with the Track of their feet, many of their Runners and Bars of their Sledges by the Houses, and laid together, as if they intended to come and take them again. Pieces of Net made of Sinews and some of the Bark of the Willow Tree . . . A square Stone Kettle . . . several wooden Dishes and Troughs, Stern and part of the Keel of a large Canoe very thick Leather we thot the covering of the Canoe . . . After we had satisfied our Curiosity here, we embarked, tho' we did not know what course to steer, our Guide

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Indian woman and children of the Mackenzie River area, drawn by Alexander Hunter Murray in the early nineteenth century.

National Gallery of Canada

Portrait of Sir Alexander Mackenzie painted by Sir Thomas Lawrence, circa 1800.

> being as ignorant in this Country as any of ourselves. . . .

At 5 p.m. that day the party reached the large "Lake" the conductor had told them to expect. After camping for the night Mackenzie took the English Chief "to the highest part of the Island from which we could see the Ice in a whole Body extending from S.W. by Compass to the Eastward as far as we could see". He did not know it, but this was his first sighting — his "discovery" — of the Arctic Ocean. On their walk Mackenzie and the English Chief passed the grave of one of the men who had been there before them, "by which lay a Bow double Paddle Spear &c." On an island a few miles away his Indians found fresh human tracks and a cache of whale or fish oil.

During the next four days of futile attempts at reaching the ice, whale-hunting from birchbark canoes, musing about the rise and fall of the waters, and discussions with his guide, Mackenzie gradually realized that he had reached a northern sea. His main reason for spending so much time there, he wrote, was to search for natives "from whom perhaps I might get some interesting Intelligence tho' my Conductor assures me they are a very unaccotable [*sic*] set of Beings & most likely he says we would see some of them if we went by the Road he wanted us to come down". Mackenzie could not locate natives on the shores of the Arctic Ocean. His conductor, who must have found the explorer's refusal to listen to him exasperating, explained that they were off hunting. The Europeans did find five or six huts, and it was only after more futile searching that they gave up hope of finding more humans and re-entered the river on the 16th.

As the southerners paddled upstream they saw constant evidence of residents' use of the channels and their shores. On the 17th the party prowled around an extensive burial site, remarking on the canoe frames, paddles, sledges, and dishware that had been left with the dead. That night Mackenzie climbed a hill and found "a kind of Fence made with Branches where the Natives had set Snares to catch White Partridges". And the next day in this empty, barren land, after passing more campments imprinted with fresh human tracks, the foreign adventurers discovered "a Number of Trees Branched to the Top in several Places, it seems the Natives does this close by their Winter Quarters to direct one another". Graveyards, fences, signposts — all in the godforsaken northern wilderness!

Mackenzie awoke on the 19th to find that his conductor had deserted. "I was surprized at the fellow's honesty, he left a Skin I had given him to cover himself, & went off in his Shirt, tho' the Weather is very cold". Mackenzie's Indians said that guide had left because he was afraid he would be enslaved by the party. That night they camped close to an old Indian camp, about where Inuvik is today.

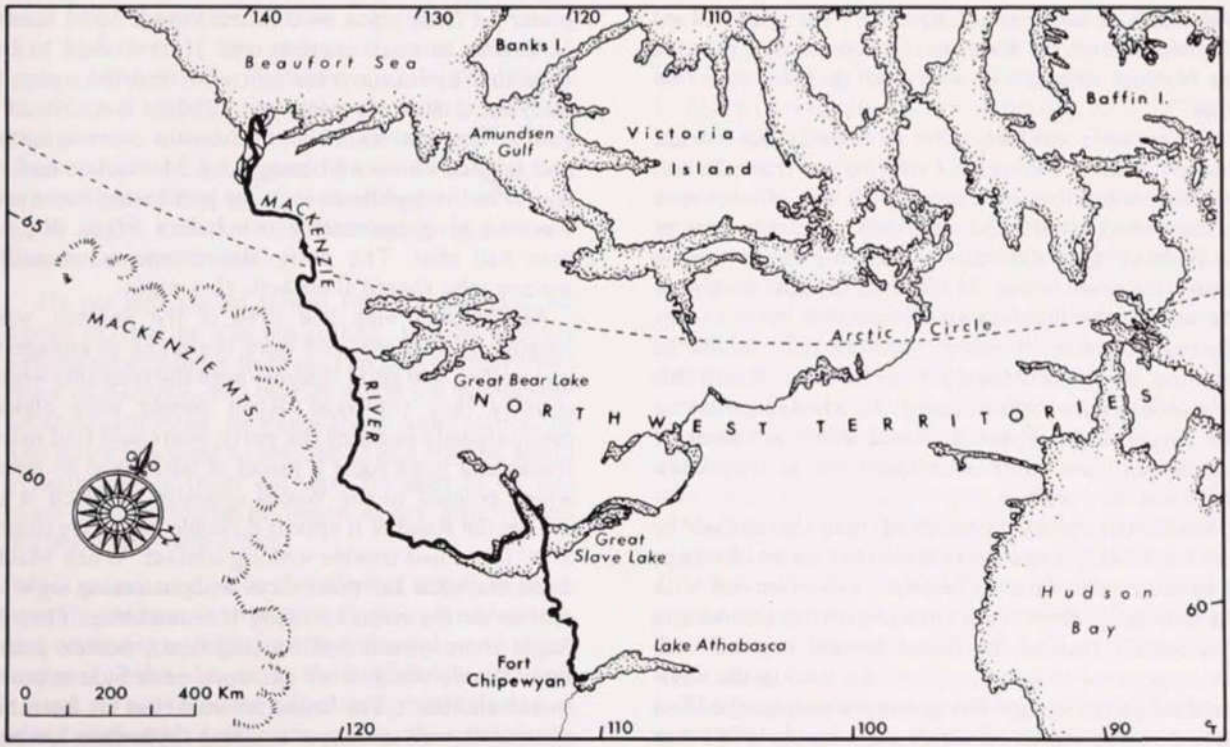
Mackenzie had some explaining to do to the runaway guide's friends when he met them again on the 21st. They were not impressed by the tale of desertion, accompanied by the return of the conductor's bow and arrow. Were the whites going to kill them all? Up and down the river, the natives were frightened by Mackenzie's firearms.

While his men paddled up the river the next morning, Mackenzie walked along the shore with some residents to their huts where he bought fish, paying in beads. He was fascinated by the natives' construction and fish-drying techniques and by the stories they had to tell of the Eskmeaux (including tales of trade 8 or 10 years earlier with "large Canoes full of White Men to the Westward"). Mackenzie's party was itself mistaken for Inuit on the 24th by natives living near the Ontaratue River who explained that the Eskmeaux put sails on their larger canoes just as his party had. Mackenzie thought it worth noting that these folk "had not heard of our being in the Country"; he must have assumed that word of his presence was otherwise communicated all along the river system.

Mackenzie did not use a local guide to go back up the river, but he was more than ever interested in gathering intelligence about a country of which he was so utterly ignorant — and so very disappointed because the waters had flowed to the north rather than to the west. On the 26th, after buying more food at a camp where the lodges "were hanging as thick with fish as

Art Gallery of Ontario

Mackenzie's first glimpse of the Pacific, a modern watercolour by J.D. Kelly.
As in the journey to the Arctic Ocean in 1789, the Indian contribution was played down. Below: Mackenzie's 1789 route.



HBC Archives

The Kutchin Indians dancing, an early nineteenth-century drawing by Alexander Hunter Murray. Older members of the group may have recalled Mackenzie's journey of 1789.

they cou'd hold", Mackenzie interviewed a Dog Rib who talked about a second large river "on the other side of the mountains to the S.W. . . . in comparison to which this is but a small River . . . He knows of no Communication by Water to the above River, those of the Natives who saw it went over the Mountains on Foot."

The explorer was hungry for more detail; his upward journey became a search for information from the several native families he encountered. The trouble was, as they frankly admitted, that they were only passing on hearsay. One did draw a map for the whites in return for some beads. Mackenzie thought it showed the way to the Pacific and immediately tried to hire the cartographer. "I ask'd this Man if he would go with me across the Mountains to the other River, this he would by no means consent to, alledging that he did not know the Road & that I wou'd get some of the People close by to accompany me as they knew the Road very well . . .".

Mackenzie became convinced that the natives he met on 27 July knew more than they let on. Perhaps if he took extra time to become "more familiar with the natives . . . they might answer with less reserve any Questions". Instead, he found himself regaled with what appeared to be tall stories of a land to the westward inhabited by non-flying winged people who lived on large birds and large beaver and who could kill men with their eyes. The frustrated explorer was sure he was being toyed with, but wasn't sure whether the fancies were being spun by the locals or his own interpreter — "long since tired of the Voyage" and fearful of having to start another one. He switched to the English Chief as a translator and resorted again to bullying tactics, threatening to abduct a native as a guide. The bearers became instantly more ignorant and feigned illness and incapacity. Mackenzie had no course but to paddle on — after purchasing more provisions and compensating one Indian whose dog his men had shot. The party also compensated native women who shared their beds that night.

Mackenzie's men had tired of the journey, were longing to be home, and were beginning to engage in quarrelling and petty thievery with the residents whose country they traversed. River people were almost ostentatiously avoiding the party, who could find many tracks and more signs ("pieces of bark fixed on poles, which pointed to the Woods opposite to which is an old Beaten Road & it appear'd People had lately passed in it"), but had trouble making contact. When Mackenzie travelled for three days without seeing signs of natives on the river, he found it remarkable. Then he found more abandoned encampments, beaten paths, and "Roads which were cut upon each Side opposite to one another". The leader insisted that his unenthusiastic followers continue "tracking the Indians", which

they did until the tracks were lost. Convinced that he was being watched by the same people who had hid from him on his way downstream — and whose campfires were left burning, sometimes out of control — Mackenzie sent men searching on the far bank of the river and several miles inland, all fruitlessly. Perhaps word had spread up the river that the white stranger with the guns would threaten and even abduct people to get his way.

Finally on 13 August, near the Trail River, the paddlers saw smoke and then some natives running away. Mackenzie ordered his men literally to chase after the residents and make them wait. "As soon as our small Canoe struck off we could see the Natives that were in their Canoes landing, drawing their Canoes on the Beach and making for the Wood . . . They were in such Terror that they left a Number of their Things on the Beach . . ."

Instead of catching the fugitives, Mackenzie's men stopped and appropriated the abandoned belongings. This was the last straw for the frustrated leader, who had followed along and now "severely rebuked the English Chief. I ordered him, his young Men and my own Men to go and look out for the Indians. I went also, but they were too much frightened and had too much the Start of us to over take them." Then Mackenzie and the English Chief had a showdown:

> The English Chief was very much displeased that I had reproach'd him, and told me so. I [had] waited [for] such an Opportunity to tell him [what I thought of] his Behaviour to me for some time past, told him that I had more reason to be angry than he, that I had come a great way at great Expence to no Purpose, and that I thot. he hid from me part of what the Natives told him respecting the Country &c. for fear that he should have to follow me, and that his Reason for not killing [game & c.] was his Jealousy, which likewise kept him from looking for the Natives as he ought, and that we never had given him any reason for such Suspicion.
>
> He got into a most violent Passion, and said, we spoke ill, that he was not jealous, that he had not concealed any thing from us, and that till now there were no Animals, and that he would not accompany us any further tho' he was without Ammunition, he cou'd live the same as the Slaves and that he would remain among them &c. &c. As soon as he was done his Harrangue he began to cry bitterly, and his Relations help'd him.

Mackenzie had gone too far. He was utterly dependent on his paddlers, interpreters, clothiers, and hunters. "As I could not well [do] without them, I was obliged to use every method to make the English Chief change his mind. At last he consented with a great Reluctance, and we embark'd. I sent the young Men across the River in case we should meet with any more of the Natives [so] they could not escape from us so easily." He also left payment on the beach for the possessions that his men took. That night, "I invited the English Chief to sup with me. I gave him a Dram or two and [we] were as good friends as ever. . . . Gave him a little grog to carry to his Tent to drown his chagrine."

Accounts and depictions of Mackenzie's travels usually minimize the Indian contribution. Here Mackenzie views the Arctic Ocean, 1789, in a modern depiction by C.W. Jefferys.

Mackenzie did not find natives to tell him more routes to the West or agree to act as conductors. In the last stages of his journey he complained frequently about his own natives' exhaustion. Given the role they had to perform on the trip — paddling as much as the Canadian voyageurs while also finding time for hunting — their fatigue is not surprising. The inference that the natives had less staying-power or stamina is improper. In fact the whites in the party did not have to work as hard as the natives. Once when Mackenzie, who by his own account had great strength and stamina (but who, of course, did not paddle his own canoe), spent most of a day (18 July) walking with the English Chief, he "found it very disagreeable and fatiguing". Another time Mackenzie persisted in trying to climb a mountain when his young Indian companion, with shoes and leggings torn to pieces, wanted to go back. The result of the leader's fortitude was that he fell into a marsh up to his armpits and had to turn back.

Mackenzie knew the strain he had put on his company and how vital they had been to his journey. Back at Yellowknife Bay on 30 August, "I gave my Indians a good Equipment of Iron work, ammunition Tobacco &c. &c. as a recompence for the misery they underwent along with me".

The great hazard on the last leg to Fort Chipewyan came when Mackenzie found his canoe taking in more

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The Mackenzie Delta, a great web of water and land.

than the usual amount of water crossing Great Slave Lake. Landing at an island, they found that some Indian child at Yellowknife Bay "had shot an Arrow throw her under Water Mark" [*sic*]. After repairs, they embarked again. On 10 September, the whites who had themselves kidnapped and threatened natives along the Mackenzie met a party of Crees (Knisteneaux) returning from war. Mackenzie gave medicine to the sick and a little ammunition to the healthy. On Saturday 12 September — he returned to Fort Chipewyan.

During the 102 days of his adventure Alexander Mackenzie had never been without the help of the native men and women who had travelled with him. As he moved through the tribal territories along the great river, he had seldom gone more than 48 hours without meeting with, chasing after, or being observed by the inhabitants of the country. His journey was a disappointment because the river did not run in the right direction and the people who lived along it could not or would not tell him how to get where he really wanted to go. He never bothered to record the native people's name for the river that other Europeans would eventually name the Mackenzie.

Four years later, of course, Mackenzie made a second great journey, the one that did take him to the Pacific. It was a much more difficult trip, through much rougher country, and tested Mackenzie's courage and leadership qualities to the extreme. But when we celebrate that bicentennial in 1993, it will again be important to pay attention to the journals and to all that Mackenzie says about the native people who conducted the strange travellers along their "beaten path" over the continental divide and then along their routes and roads to the *mer de l'ouest*. North American Indians who visit Europe today will get similar help and hospitality in their explorations. ♦

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Independent Colliers At Fort Rupert

LABOUR UNREST ON THE WEST COAST, 1849

By Lynne Bowen

. . . now we are on Vancouver's Island and we are put to the sinking of a Pit to look for coal a thing we never agreed for as we came out here to work coal not to look for it and do all manner of work and I consider the company has broken our agreement . . .
— from the diary of Andrew Muir, 25 October 1849.

Andrew Muir, independent collier, was a literate artisan from the lowlands of Scotland. He had been recruited by the Hudson's Bay Company in 1848 to mine coal on Vancouver Island. Andrew and his father, three brothers, and two cousins, were to constitute the first group of coal miners to be hired by the fur-trading giant. That the Company hired Scots for this new venture was well in keeping with a long-standing and successful policy, but colliers of that race were an entirely new experience for the HBC.

The dramatic amalgamation of the HBC with the North West Company in 1821 had added a new and energetic element to the Scottish tradition, for many of the men brought into the Company through this merger were highlanders. Thus Frasers, Camerons, McKenzies, and McLoughlins began to staff the HBC forts and in many cases command them. Close family ties provided a virtually inexhaustible source of new recruits as well.

Included in the booty acquired in the amalgamation with the North West Company, were forts on the Columbia River in present-day Oregon and Washington, forts in the interior of New Caledonia to the north, and trading rights on the Pacific coast. There, Governor Sir George Simpson began to establish new fur trade posts. The second such establishment was Fort McLoughlin on Millbank Sound, north of Vancouver Island. It was from there in 1835 that William Fraser Tolmie, a young Glaswegian, reported the presence of coal deposits on Vancouver Island.

Tolmie was only relaying what the blacksmith had told him. The blacksmith had in turn communicated what he had been told by visiting Kwakiutl Indians who noted that he was burning black rock like that which lay on the beaches near their homes. The report caused very little stir, although the HBC steamer *Beaver* stopped briefly in 1836 to confirm the existence of surface outcroppings of coal on the north end of Vancouver Island.

The presence of coal meant little to a fur trading company. The *Beaver* was the Company's only steam driven ship and it could function quite well burning wood cut from the thick forests that lined its regular route supplying the forts along the coast. However, world events in the next decade changed the Company's assessment of the value of the coal deposit.

Sailing ships were giving way to less beautiful but more practical steamers. In the 1840s, the Royal Navy realized that its dominance of the world's oceans could only be maintained with modern vessels. But those ships needed fueling depots all over the world. Suddenly the coal deposits in the Pacific Northwest looked very attractive.

In 1846, H.M.S. *Cormorant*, a vessel capable of making way under steam or sail, was dispatched to

Archibald and Julia Muir. Archibald Muir was a member of the first group of Scottish miners recruited by the HBC. He was the nephew of John Muir and cousin of the diarist Andrew Muir.

the Pacific during the Oregon crisis. That confrontation between acquisitive Americans and acquiescent Englishmen had resulted in the establishment of the American border at the forty-ninth parallel. The HBC had already moved its Pacific depot from Fort Vancouver on the Columbia River to Fort Victoria on the southern tip of Vancouver Island. It was from there that the *Cormorant* proceeded up the eastern side of the island, through Johnstone Strait, to the Kwakiutl village at Beaver Harbour.

Sixty tons of coal changed hands in return for blankets and tobacco. The friendly Kwakiutl must have been incredulous. These white men were prepared to give valuable trade goods in return for the worthless rock which they could pick up on the beaches or dig easily from surface pits with whatever sharpened tool came to hand. Since the Indian tradition of the potlatch depended on new sources of desirable goods, it appeared to them that they had gained the better side of the bargain.

Two more years passed before the Scottish shipping magnate, Samuel Cunard, was able to convince the British Admiralty that it was necessary to protect the Vancouver Island coal deposits from the Americans. The gunboats H.M.S. *Constance* and H.M.S. *Pandora* were instructed to visit Beaver Harbour and establish a presence by erecting a log shed and posting a notice which read "the Lands adjacent together with the Coal and other minerals were taken possession of for Her Majesty". The Admiralty further ordered Company men to build a proper fort which would also serve as a fur trading establishment.

Fort Rupert was an anomaly in the HBC scheme of things. Its primary purpose was to extract coal from the ground, a function very far removed from fur trading. The men who were to supervise the activity at the fort were fur traders and the men who worked under them were Company men. No one knew anything about coal mining.

The surface coal did not burn particularly well and in any case would soon run out. Proper mines would be needed and no one in the fort knew how that should be done. The Board of Management in London wanted Indians to be used for underground mining as well, but Sir George Simpson, the man on the front lines, insisted on experienced miners.

The Governor was wise to insist that someone be brought in who knew about coal mining. So far the whole enterprise had been founded on the opinions of men with no knowledge of mining and no ability to judge coal quality. The Governor's wisdom did not extend far enough however. What he needed were miners experienced in the development of new shafts; what he asked for were men accustomed to working in established mines.

The Company proceeded with the recruitment process. In accordance with their long held practice, they recruited in Scotland. But whereas Scots, whether Orcadians, lowlanders, or highlanders, had made such successful fur traders, Scottish miners were a different breed entirely. Company men were used to serving under indenture agreements, were used to the harsh conditions of Company forts, and were prepared to accept the Royal Navy style of discipline which had been found necessary to control men in isolated situations.

Scottish miners, on the other hand, were independent artisans whose skill had been hard won and whose traditions, paradoxically, had been born in serfdom. The Emancipation Act of 1775 had brought to an end a century of practices which had effectively bound the coal miners of that northern country to the gentry who owned the coal. These landowners hired "coalmasters" to develop and work the mines. Legislation to ensure a supply of labour bound the collier to the coalmaster by accepting "arles", or bounty money. The only security the collier could offer for these loans was the future labour of his children, thus enslaving yet another generation.

The 1775 legislation only began a gradual process of emancipation, the stigma of serfdom which marked the men even after they had gained their freedom tending to set the coal mining community apart. In addition, the practice of marrying within the community ensured this continued separateness, since marriage to a collier usually meant work in the mines for the woman as well. Because only colliers' daughters were willing to do this work, miners tended to marry miners' daughters.

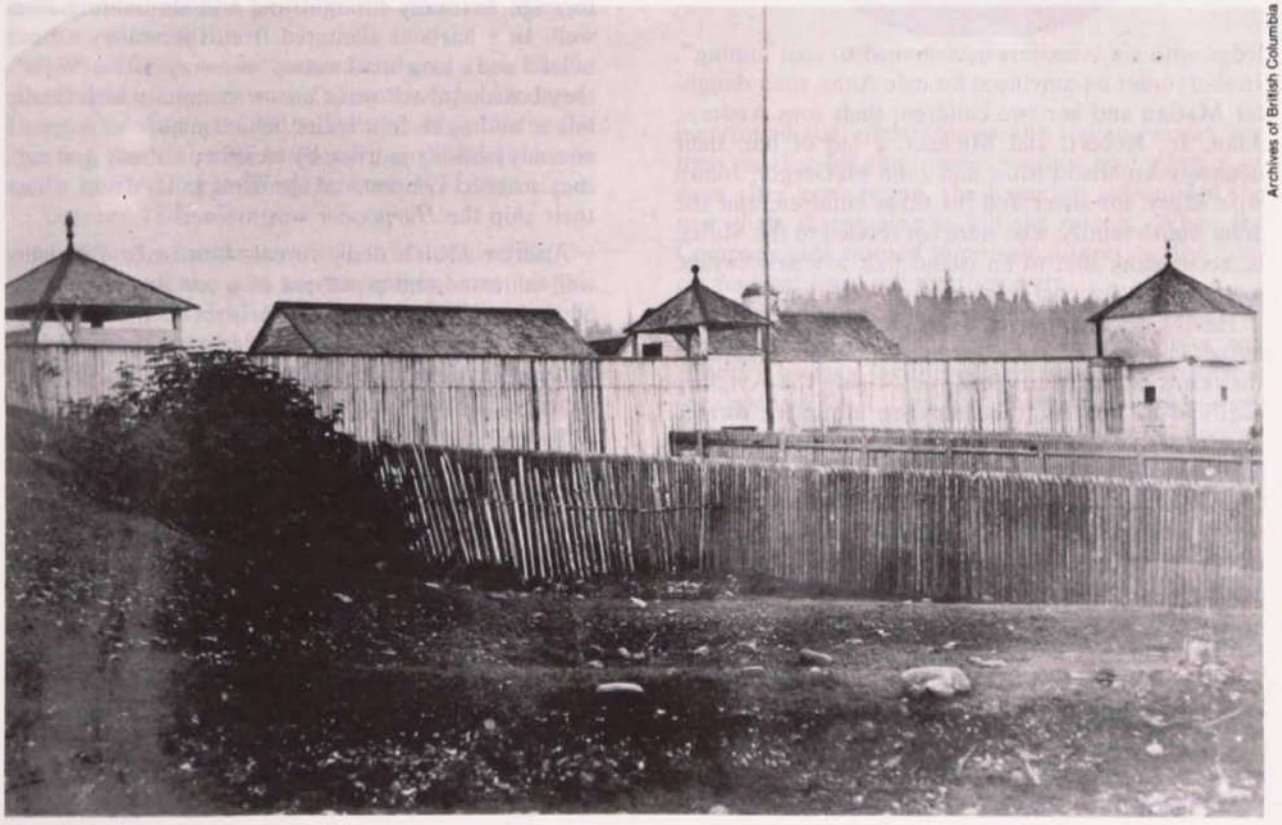
The non-mining community had no interest in working underground. Thus, the skill of the miner was an increasingly desirable commodity and it was in the growing awareness of the value of their skills that the tradition of the "independent collier" had its roots. For a man to call himself an independent collier was to say that he had served a long apprenticeship, was able to work on his own, and could determine how much work he would do in a day and when he had worked enough. He dug at his own pace, in the manner he thought best, stopped for lunch when he was ready, and had a good knowledge of practical geology and the use of various tools. At the end of his apprenticeship he acquired the status of "a full man", an accomplishment celebrated in a secret ceremony called "brothering" during which an oath was sworn on the Bible and toasted with strong drink.

The concept of the independent collier was at odds with the idea of collective action, however. Isolated and proud, they rode the crest of an early nineteenth-century industrial boom in the west of Scotland, where their labour was in demand, their wage demands met, and their living conditions verging on luxurious. It was only when the boom failed after 1817 that colliers began to see a certain value in unions. A later resurgence of industrial activity midway in the century did not bring a return to prosperous times for the miners for by then employers were importing thousands of eager but unskilled Irishmen. Union strength was sapped and union membership discredited.

It was to this displaced labour market of skilled miners that the HBC turned its attention. A mine manager named David Landale was commissioned to find the right men. From his knowledge of miners in the west of Scotland, he knew that here were men who would produce more coal in a day and be less militant than those from other Scottish shires.

Andrew Muir's father John became aware of Landale's activities when he read an ad in a newspaper. A practical and skilled miner with a large family of sons and nephews also experienced in mining, John Muir answered the criteria specified by the HBC for "a miner possessing both scientific and practical know-

Fort Rupert, scene of the Company's first coal operation.



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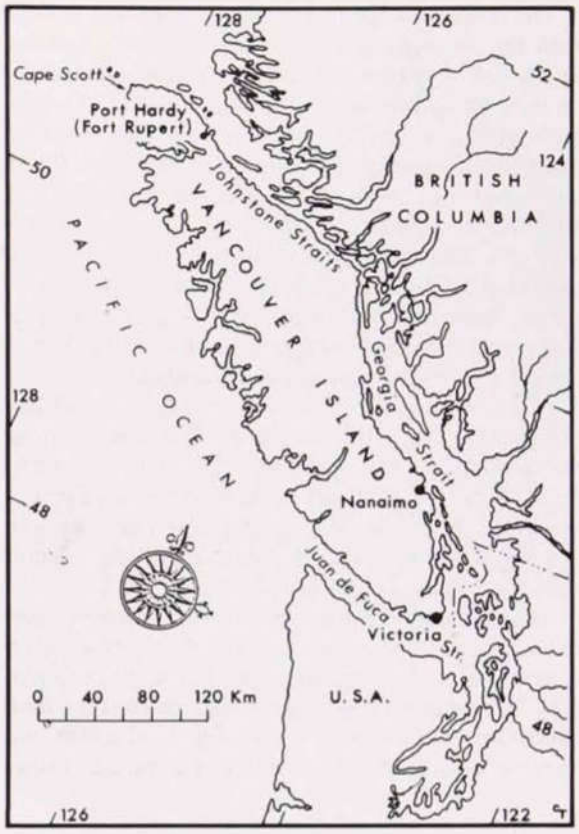


ledge with six labourers accustomed to coal mining". In short order he convinced his wife Anne, their daughter Marian and her two children; their sons Andrew, John, Jr., Robert, and Michael, a lad of ten; their nephews Archibald Muir and John McGregor, John's wife Mary, his sister and his three children; and the John Smith family, who were not related to the Muirs, to accompany him to an island half a year's voyage away, to dig for coal in a non-existent mine.

Having never employed miners before, the Company asked Landale to make recommendations regarding the terms of the Muirs' contract. Using the Ayrshire coalfield as a basis, the manager, himself a former pitman, set about to determine wages and working conditions. Pay was to be based on the Ayrshire "darg", that being the maximum a man could make for a day's work under specific conditions. Using that figure, which in Ayrshire was fairly high, Landale suggested an annual wage of fifty to sixty pounds.

A yearly wage was standard practice for the HBC but Landale's proposed addition of a piece-work bonus was not. Because he felt that "from the habits of that class of men there is no possibility of getting anything like a fair day's work from them on stated wages alone . . .", he proposed a bonus of two shillings sixpence per ton for any coal mined over thirty tons per month. The rest of the provisions were essentially the same as in the standard HBC contract.

Based on Landale's suggestions, the contract was drawn up and duly signed in Scotland before the miners left for their embarkation point in London. The fifty pound annual wage was generous for the times, but considered necessary to lure men away from home. A three-year term of indenture was to begin from the time the ship left London; free passage home would be provided at the end of a properly fulfilled contract; and the miners would be supplied with materials and the assistance of Company employees when they built their own homes.

Subsequent contracts with later groups of miners changed the length of tenure and the wages paid, but the most important item and the one which caused the most trouble for the Muirs was the description of their job. In a phrase which showed the Company's inexperience, the jobs were described as "working collier or labourer". These were not mining terms and did not define their responsibilities in a manner that the miners could understand. The use of these terms would lead directly to the first coal miners' strike on Vancouver Island and to a major disruption in the Company's long and fruitful association with men of the Scottish race.

From the Ayrshire town of Irvine, the Muirs left by train for the port of Troon in a confusion of last minute luggage hurriedly brought and friends bidding farewell. In a harbour sheltered from the sea by a hook of land and a long breakwater, "on a very coarse Night", they boarded the *Royal Consort* steamer which finally left at midnight, four hours behind schedule. After an onerous two-day journey by steamer, railway and cab, they reached London and the West India docks where their ship the *Harpooner* was moored.

Andrew Muir's diary reveals him to be relatively well-educated and possessed of a certain lyrical turn of phrase. His description of their six-month-long voyage is lively and poignant as he describes the hardships and satisfactions of ocean travel in the mid-nineteenth century. The diary also reveals much of the man's personality and gives the reader a better understanding of the type of man that the HBC had hired to mine coal.

This was a lively man, keen for new experience, tolerant of the women in his family who took to their beds with *mal de mer* and his cousin Archy who took refuge in superstitious incantations. He was willing to do more than his share of galley work and relished the extra rum which he received for his pains. But for all his *joie de vivre*, he had an intolerant side which showed itself on occasions when he felt badly treated. On the ship, these occasions occurred when another passenger refused to do galley work, or the crew refused to reef

the sails. An altercation over provisions is described by an indignant Andrew:

> . . . [A] regular row with Doctor and Capt. about our allowance of provisions being too little, being less than we ought to get from the list of the stores laid in for us . . . but we got no redress, they are not willing to do justice it seems to me they know not the term justice. I hope one day I shall be able to see justice done to its full extent, and that the aggressor may be punished.

Such righteous indignation would flare again and again as the voyage progressed and yet again after the *Harpooner* reached Fort Victoria. It was there, while waiting for transportation to Fort Rupert at the other end of Vancouver Island, that the Muirs became aware of the ambiguity in their job description. The "working colliers or labourers" as their contract described them, were put to work blasting rock for the new Royal Navy dockyard at Esquimalt. In fact, they were not allowed to proceed to Fort Rupert until the dockyard was completed.

When the miners' party finally left Fort Victoria on 27 August 1849, they had been delayed for three months. They had worked as common labourers and had discovered in an interview with Chief Factor James Douglas that the price of food was exhorbitant. Their dissatisfaction can only have been enhanced by the tedious month-long voyage up the west coast of the Island, around Cape Scott at the northern tip, and south to the new fort.

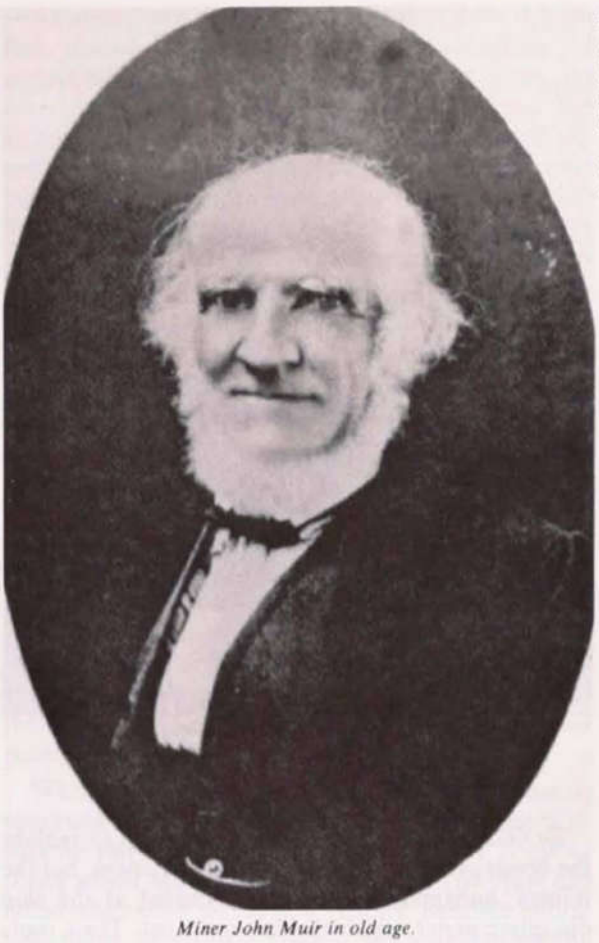
HBC officials were contradictory in their initial assessment of the men who came to dig coal. James Douglas complained that he had the utmost difficulty "getting the Muirs off to Fort Rupert". Eden Colvile wrote to Sir George Simpson from Fort Victoria on 15 October 1849 saying:

> Mr. Douglas speaks very well of Mr. Mure [*sic*] the headsman of the coal miners, and the rest left this place very well satisfied. They worked very well while they were here and I have no doubt a great quantity of coal will be got out this winter.

Eden Colvile would be wrong about the Muirs again. The large amounts of coal would fail to materialize as well.

The arrival of the Muirs at Fort Rupert on 24 September 1849 was observed by thirty-five Company men and hundreds of Indians. Mutual exploitation had created an environment where white man and Indian could exist in relative peace, but all the fort's occupants were wary of the newcomers.

The miners stood apart. Being ignorant in the building of houses, they required much help, which was given grudgingly. They were to be paid extra over the amount of their annual wages. They seemed a privileged lot. The Indians were wary of them too. If these



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Miner John Muir in old age.

men found coal underground, the Indians would lose their market for the inferior surface coal. Only four days after work began, the Kwakiutl surrounded the new shaft threatening to kill the miners. When the Company men refused to provide protection, the miners realized how isolated they were.

And the miners had grievances of their own. Disappointed by the absence of a working mine or any effective loading facilities, ignorant in the technique for sinking a shaft, they had, nevertheless, set to work digging a drain to take away surface water but digging without proper tools. Since their bonus system was based on how much extra coal they dug, it was necessary to find coal in order to earn the bonus. But the black mineral eluded them. Working with sharpened sticks and adzes meant for shaping logs, unable to pump the water out of the shaft, and threatened by envious Indians, they soon became very unhappy. Andrew lamented in his diary:

> . . . thus we have been kept knocked about at everything away from the Fort with our work and no protection and everything about the Pit to do ourselves without any assistance . . .

Archives of British Columbia

Richard Blanshard, colonial governor.

To placate them, James Douglas agreed to replace the bonus system with an extra daily payment, but the miners' unhappiness grew. They chafed at the ship discipline under which the fort operated. Their roofs leaked, their food was too expensive, they could not adjust to the spare diet which Company men accepted with little complaint.

Winter came with freezing rain and heavy snowfalls. By February 1850, the pit had reached seventy feet without striking useable coal. Company officials in Fort Victoria seemed unaware of the miners' discontent, however. Douglas reported that the miners appeared satisfied. John Work paid a brief visit in March and reported "all was going well and the miners apparently in high spirits".

One official saw things differently. When he arrived in Fort Rupert at the end of March, Richard Blanshard was the newly appointed first Governor of the Colony of Vancouver Island. He had absolutely nothing to do. James Douglas appeared to be functioning as governor and he certainly did not want Blanshard interfering. With no office, no army, no police force, and a lot of time on his hands, the Governor decided to make a vice-regal visit to the only other settlement

Blanshard spent two hours with the miners hearing their complaints. His report to the colonial office stating that the miners were "unprovided with proper implements, discontented with their employers, and can scarcely be induced to work" seems to be only an accurate description of the situation, but it was used against him by those in the colony who wished to see him gone.

Captain William Henry McNeill was the man in charge of Fort Rupert. A man with a legendary temper, he ruled the fort with an iron hand. Because he was also in charge of the HBC maritime operations, he was often away. In his absence he delegated command to his son-in-law, George Blenkinsop.

It was during one of McNeill's frequent absences that trouble finally erupted. Andrew Muir and his cousin John McGregor were ordered to dig a drain. When they refused, Blenskinsop charged them with breaching their contract and fined them fifty pounds, a full year's wages. When he also charged Muir with being "a rebellious person" who kept men off their duty, Muir chose to regard that as defamation of character. "So that we could not please with our work," he wrote, "we stop for the present until matters are settled". It was 26 April 1850. The first Vancouver Island coal miners' strike had begun.

Contemporary and modern commentators have assigned a variety of motives to the miners. With the perspective that only the passage of time can provide and given the sequence of events, it is now possible to say with some assurance that the Scottish miners were motivated by pride rather than avarice. The inhabitants of Fort Rupert did not hear about the gold discovery in California until 24 May when the barque *England* sailed into Beaver Harbour. By then Andrew and John had been confined for six days in one of the fort's bastions in leg irons and the other miners had joined them for the last two days.

They had refused to work because the working conditions were so far removed from what they had come to expect given their skills and traditions. Having made the decision not to work for the Company, the men welcomed the news of the gold rush. Isolated in country where the HBC was the only authority for thousands of miles, they now had a place to go, a place where they might even strike it rich.

Following their release from captivity on 9 May, the striking miners were subjected to house arrest and their families to harassment. Refused food and powder with which to hunt game for themselves, the families bought meat and fish from the Indians. However, when they attempted to bring it back to the fort, the food was confiscated.

The strike continued against a background of deteriorating discipline. English labourers, newly arrived, followed the example of the miners and refused to work. Company employees drank rum in large quantities and began to fight and fire their guns. Andrew wrote indignantly:

> Mark the craft of the officers in giving their rum, they put this injunction on them "Not to tell the Englishmen" it is like telling a man to thrust his hand in the fire and not burn himself, a person might as well live in the worst place of common fame in Glasgow as live here where vice of every kind is permitted . . . and is allowed to pass unheeded and yet this is in the service of the H.B. Coy.

The arrival of the *England* had exacerbated an already bad situation. Alcohol surreptitiously brought from the ship replenished the fort's supply. The sailors told stories of the gold and the women in California. Suddenly there was an alternative to staying in the isolated fort. A miners' delegation, headed by Andrew Muir, informed Blenkinsop that they would leave on the *England* to go to Fort Victoria, speak to James Douglas, and then sever their connections with the Company.

The situation was complicated by the appointment of a green young doctor to be magistrate. Dr. John Helmcken received a letter on 22 June from Governor Blanshard empowering him to appoint special constables and conduct an inquiry. Helmcken's career as a magistrate was doomed before it began. The doctor was young and inexperienced; he had neither a knowledge of the law nor books to instruct him. Both McNeill and Blenkinsop were absent from the fort. When he called for volunteers to serve as constables, no one came forward. By then everyone — Scottish miners, English labourers, and Company men — had a grievance.

The situation was further complicated by the escape of four sailors who were being held prisoner on the *England* for desertion. Their subsequent murder by Newitty Indians further up the coast made Helmcken's task of restoring order impossible.

Seeing no hope of resolution of their status and having previously stated their intention to leave, Andrew Muir, five other miners, six labourers, and a blacksmith slipped away from Fort Rupert by canoe on the evening of 2 July. Seeking refuge with the Newitty, they waited to be picked up by the *England* when it left Beaver Harbour.

The plan was for the *England* to leave on 7 July with the miners' families on board and for the ship to pick up the miners on her way north before rounding Cape Scott and turning south toward California. Like all sailing ships, the *England* was at the mercy of wind and tide. It took nine days during which the ship tacked back and forth, fighting the current and the northwest winds before she was able to make enough headway to clear the Beaver Harbour area and pick up the miners. All plans to stop at Fort Victoria were abandoned, if they had ever existed. The *England* made swift passage to San Francisco where the mining families disembarked for the gold fields.

At almost the same time that the miners left the fort, James Douglas wrote to London asking for replacements. Again, David Landale was given the recruiting task and again he looked to Scotland. The second group of Ayrshiremen he hired included two men who deserted even before reaching Vancouver Island but also included Robert Dunsmuir, who worked diligently and eventually became a very wealthy man having discovered his own coal seam north of Nanaimo.

The third shipload of Scottish miners was even more disappointing than the first. Forty miners and their families aboard the vessel *Colinda* mutinied and were removed from the ship in Valparaiso, Chile.

Despite the fact that the Muirs returned to the Island and were among the miners to develop the much more successful Nanaimo coal field starting in 1852, the HBC was heartily sick of Scottish miners. The decision was made to recruit in the Black Country of England instead. The Company vessel *Princess Royal* deposited the English miners and their families in the new town of Nanaimo in 1854 and found that the pride and stubbornness of coal miners knew no national boundaries. The *Princess Royal* miners struck and deserted the coal fields several times before they made their peace with the HBC.

When the Company decided to sell their Nanaimo operation in 1862, it had been in the coal mining business for thirteen years and wanted out of it. A hiring policy which had been advantageous for 160 years had failed when tried on the new venture. Scottish miners were hardy, literate and skilled, they were diligent and assiduous, but when an earlier observer had described Scots as being "strictly obedient to their employers" he had not encountered the Scottish independent collier. ♦

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Nascopie at War

The HBC Supply Ship Braved U-Boats and Ice On Its Dangerous Journey North in 1942

by Peter Candy

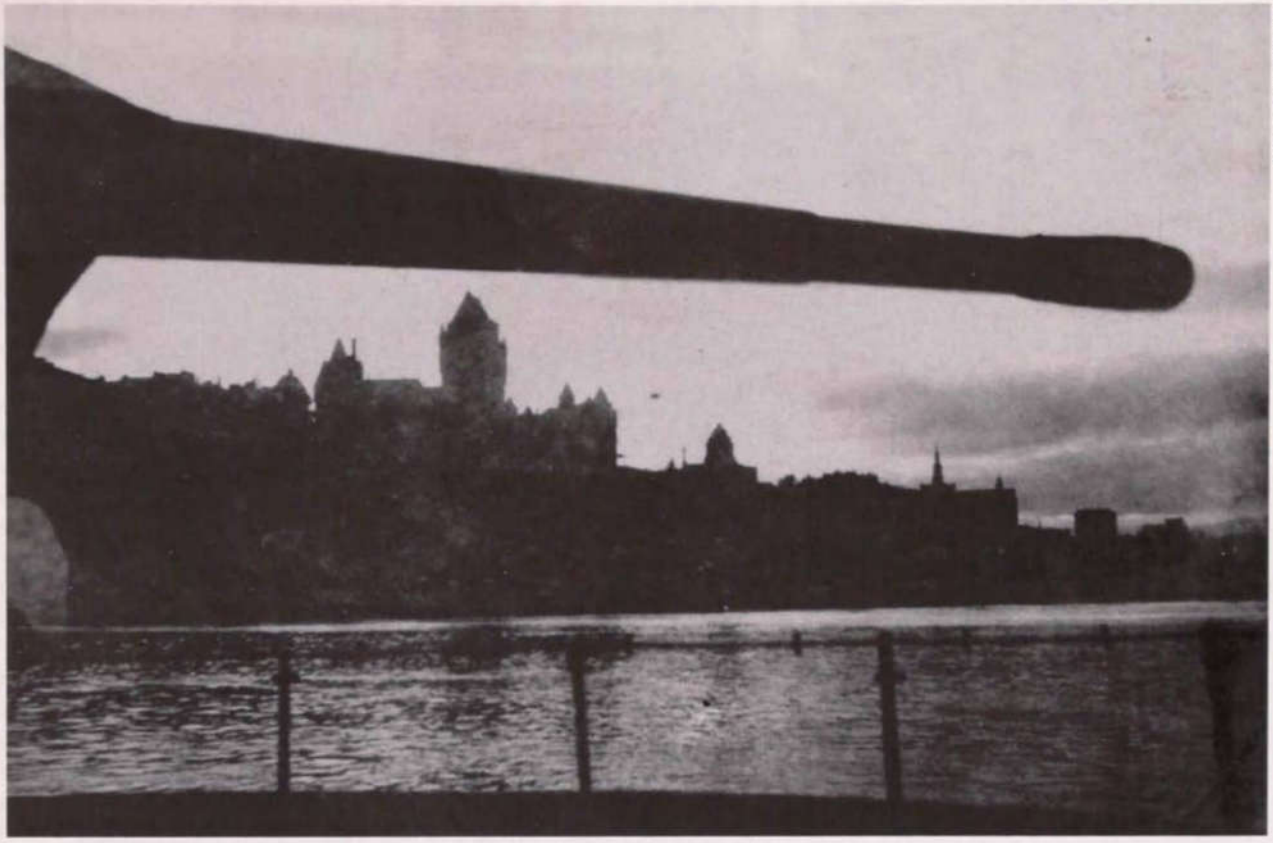
When the *Nascopie* set off in 1942 on her annual supply trip to the Eastern Arctic, her redoubtable master, Captain Thomas Smellie, knew he faced more than customary odds. He had coped before with crushing ice, impelling tides and fierce storms, but this time he could expect new and deadly opposition from German submarines roaming the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Besides being cautious, his ship had to be stealthy. As well as protecting herself against the elements, she might have to engage in armed combat. The set of forces directing the *Nascopie*'s path that year almost claimed her and the lives of those aboard. What started as a routine patrol turned into a prolonged, 12,000-mile voyage of unexpected incidents, thwarted desires, and moments of triumph and terror.

Four friends and I, all fresh out of school in Ottawa, joined her as stewards. We were signed on in Montreal in June through the Central Merchant Marine manning pool and told to go to Shed 27 near the Jacques Cartier Bridge. Seeing the towering outline of only one ship's superstructure above the shed, we approached elatedly and then discovered a brand new 10,000-ton boat. Behind, almost out of sight, squatted the little *Nascopie*, only 300 feet long with a displacement of barely 2,000 tons. Her long narrow hull and old-fashioned clipper ship stern, tall pipestem funnel, and jutting deck houses compared quite unfavourably with the smooth modern lines of the new vessel. The *Nascopie* also needed repainting. After this had been done and the larger boat moved to another loading area, the *Nascopie* not only looked better but also bigger. What impressed us most, though, was her newly-fitted armament.

The Americans had entered the war in late 1941 after Pearl Harbour. While they were preoccupied in the Pacific against the Japanese, the Germans marshalled their most powerful long-range submarines for attacks against shipping along the eastern coasts of South, Central, and North America. Penetrating deep into the Gulf of Mexico, the Caribbean, and the St. Lawrence River, U-boats sank 514 ships from January to May, up to nearly a million tons a month, the greatest loss of ships in any five-month period of the entire war. In the panic, ships were abandoned in mid-ocean or beached on the nearest shore if a U-boat was suspected of lurking nearby. The American navy was so disorganized that it failed to sink a single submarine until April and the second one in June. U.S. convoys only began to shape up in July. Canadian convoys, on the other hand, had been operational since the outbreak of war in 1939.

Into this turmoil came the *Nascopie*, which had served since 1912 as the Hudson's Bay Company's supply carrier for its Eastern Arctic trading posts and the Canadian government's sole direct link with the northern people. As a British-registered ship, she was entitled to lend-lease armament of First World War vintage stored at Norfolk, Virginia. In view of this opportunity and the increasing U-boat activity, her owners decided to arm her. This was done at Norfolk, and at that stage old ship watchers had an unsettling sense of *déjà vu:* the *Nascopie* was cast back into a role she had performed 25 years previously.

In the First World War, under charter to the French, she had been an armed merchantman in the Arctic-Murmansk and White Sea regions, transporting and keeping shipping lanes open. She was a young ship then, having been designed and built in Scotland in



Peter Candy Collection

Quebec City and the St. Lawrence under the gun.

1911-12 as one of four semi-icebreakers. Three of them were sold to Russia and one to Job Brothers, a Newfoundland company, to operate along the Labrador coast as a cargo and sealing vessel. It was named *Nascopie* after an Indian band living in Quebec. The Hudson's Bay Company owned the majority interest in the steamer. None of her sister ships survived the war; all were lost to the elements or enemy action, and the *Nascopie* herself had one close encounter which inspired the myth that she actually sank a German submarine. What happened was less decisive but certainly daring, according to the records of the British Ministry of Defence. On 14 June 1917 at 2:35 p.m., in icy waters north of Murmansk, she sighted a submarine which shortly afterwards opened fire. Bringing the submarine astern, the *Nascopie* replied with a 12-pounder gun at 6,000 yards. She reported to the British Admiralty that her fourth shot appeared to be a hit, causing an explosion with smoke and flames, after which the submarine was not seen again. Destruction of the submarine was considered by the Admiralty as "improbable". Later examination of German records showed that the submarine was *U-28*, commanded by Kapitänleutnant Georg Schmidt, and that she was not damaged in the action as all the *Nascopie*'s shot fell short, according to the naval historical records of the British Ministry of Defence. But she did succeed in driving off an enemy submarine by gunfire.

The *Nascopie* was then under the command of a Newfoundland skipper, G. Edmund Mack. Now, under Captain Smellie, she was again prepared for action with a 3.7-inch naval gun (mounted aft on a circular gun deck) which was very like the one that had fired at *U-28*. Now, also, a turret erected on the after deck house supported two heavy-calibre machine guns. Finally, she received four slide-mounted life rafts, two forward of the bridge on either rail and two amidships. If torpedoed, a crew had between two and four minutes to get standard lifeboats away; these rafts could be launched in seconds by merely pulling a pin on the slide.

Thus prepared for the new submarine warfare, the *Nascopie* sailed to Charleston, North Carolina, to load a bulk cargo of fertilizer for Cuba, now the epicentre of the long-range U-boat attacks on tankers sailing to New York carrying oil from Venezuela. From Cuba she carried sugar for a refinery in New York, then promptly sailed on to Halifax in late April. All this time, without any naval escort, she threaded her way through the height of the Battle of the Atlantic.

HBC Archives

Captain Thomas Smellie aboard the "Nascopie".

In Halifax, the *Nascopie* lost several experienced personnel in a general exodus of crew. Captain Smellie, the first and second mates, and the chief steward, Arthur Reed, remained on board, along with the baker, the bo'sun and a few others, as well as two Royal Navy gunners who had been assigned before the ship went to Norfolk. The replacements taken on before the *Nascopie* could sail to Montreal to load supplies for her arctic duties were mostly ex-tankermen whose experiences in the preceding five months made them thankful to be aboard a safer "dry" cargo vessel, however unlovely. George, the cook, had been aboard a loaded lumber ship torpedoed south of Newfoundland early in March, and had been rescued by fishermen; Jimmy, the baker, had survived two torpedoings, one on a blazing oil tanker. Understandably, some of these men had lost any sense of adventure they may have had. Every member of the *Nascopie*'s crew was to receive a war risk bonus of $20 a month. For the stewards, this was a huge increase over the basic pay of $45 a month. In this post-Depression era, it was big money; we would be rich beyond the dreams of avarice. Since we would not be going ashore to spend any money for five months, we would be paid off with more than $300 for less than half a year's work. (That $20 bonus, incidentally, would buy 200 ten-cent glasses of beer or 400 five-cent cups of coffee.) Motivated by the bonus and all sorts of other reasons, a crew somehow assembled. Captain Smellie looked them over and expressed the uncharitable opinion that the Halifax jails must have released all their inmates. But he was a perfectionist who was accustomed to sailing north every year with the same competent crew of Newfoundlanders, and for the coming trip too few of them had stayed with the ship.

The ex-tankermen among the crew were less than pleased with their prospects for survival when they saw what was loaded at Montreal apart from consignments for the trading posts: 45-gallon drums of kerosene, gasoline, and diesel oil covered the decks rail to rail. Some of this fuel was to be deposited at Resolution Island for the *St. Roch*, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police ship, which was to make her celebrated first passage from west to east through the Northwest Passage. The *Nascopie* hoped to meet the *St. Roch* midway, at Fort Ross, but because of radio silence imposed on both ships and uncertainty about the *St. Roch*'s progress through the western half of the Arctic we might pass without meeting, hence the prearranged cache on Resolution Island.

The old tanker hands muttered about all that volatile fuel. They knew that if we got hit we would light up the lower St. Lawrence like Times Square on New Year's Eve. Later in the summer, off Belle Isle, this is what happened to an old laker, the *Donald Stewart*, carrying a deck cargo of aviation gasoline. She exploded like a bomb.

With loading complete, we proceeded from Montreal on 8 July to Quebec City. Until May, there had been no submarine activity in the lightly-travelled St. Lawrence region; the main U-boat assault had been against trans-Atlantic convoys originating in Sydney and Halifax, Nova Scotia. But in May and June, when ships were torpedoed within sight of villages on the south shore of the St. Lawrence River, many Quebecers including anti-conscriptionists, were shocked and dismayed. "Why", they asked, "are we messing around with the ships and men in Europe when the enemy is within our shores?" Ottawa responded by directing several Royal Canadian Navy corvettes from the already hard-pressed Atlantic convoys.

At Quebec City the *Nascopie* prepared for her run through what we imagined to be U-boat-infested waters. Lifeboats were swung out of the deck cradles and over the sides into the drop position, gun crews were trained by the two Royal Navy gunners, passengers were organized with field glasses to keep watch during daylight hours, dead lights were closed on all portholes, personal radio receivers were impounded, and blackout curtains were hung at doorways. The British gunners quartered aft with us had made up a little bundle of extra clothing and placed it in No. 4 lifeboat. We jokingly reminded them of the British naval tradition of going down with all guns firing. They replied that the first off should be the best dressed.

Finally, on 11 July, we sailed from Quebec City accompanied by six small merchant ships and two corvettes, the *Trail* and the *Shawinigan*. Our speed was set by the slowest ship in the convoy, an ancient coal-burning lake freighter loaded with building supplies for the new airfield being constructed at Goose Bay, Labrador. As we lazed along at six knots or so, everything looked utterly peaceful: a soft summer sun, flat calm seas. The *Nascopie*, operating at little more than half speed, kept up near the front of the convoy. In the round of shipboard duties, we forgot about the danger; tension cannot be sustained for long. If anything, we became aware of our unawareness. As we travelled along the north shore of the St. Lawrence and north of Anticosti Island, we began counting the days until we would pass through the Strait of Belle Isle ("Torpedo Junction") because once we had turned due north along the Labrador Coast ("Iceberg Alley") we would be clear of the area frequented by U-boats.

As we sailed toward the ocean, our opinion of the *Nascopie* shifted from initial disappointment to

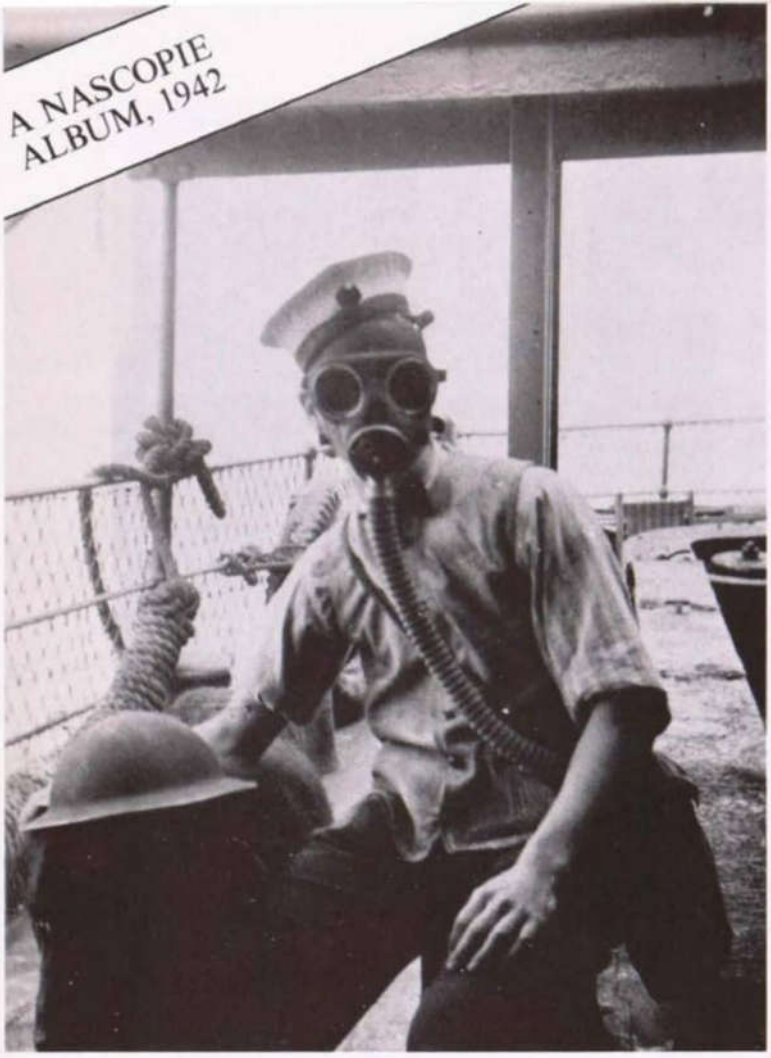
Peter Candy Collection

The author with two Royal Navy gunners.

increasing confidence, indeed admiration. No ship tied to a dock looks her best. A ship only really lives under her own power, producing her own sounds and movement through the sea. Besides, as we looked around at the other ships in our convoy, we realized that we had the biggest gun in the fleet. Everyone wanted to have his photograph taken next to it wearing a Royal Navy sailor's cap.

We also became acquainted with our fellow travellers. In the world of the Eastern Arctic, so large on the map and yet so small in population (then 6,000), the *Nascopie* was like Noah's Ark. Aboard were two bishops (Catholic and Anglican), two United States Army Air Force captains as observers, the head of the Hudson's Bay Company Eastern Arctic division, a Royal Canadian Mounted Police inspector, a doctor, a dentist, a postmaster, HBC post managers and Mounties. The senior official was Major David McKeand, officer-in-charge of the Eastern Arctic Patrol for the Dominion Government. In all, there were about 90 people aboard, passengers and crew being in roughly equal numbers.

A NASCOPIE ALBUM, 1942



In the short summer nights, the ghostly forms of blacked-out ships moved in eerie procession. Our waggish companions assured us that no matter where we went in the Gulf we would never be more than a mile from solid ground, even if it was straight down. Yet our smooth trip to Belle Isle went without incident, and there the convoy dispersed, the two corvettes picking up a small group of ships returning to Quebec City. We proceeded north to Cartwright in Hamilton Inlet to load two large motor lighters or powered barges which would transfer cargo to the beaches of the various trading posts we called at in the months ahead.

Moving north along the Labrador coast, we called at Hebron on 17 July and there had our first introduction to the Inuit. At this stage, our concerns centred more on icebergs than on U-boats. The gun crews stood down, the gun was wrapped in canvas, and lifeboats were reeled in from the drop position and secured in their deck cradles. The radio silence and blackout were strictly maintained, and the wisdom of this was demonstrated just two months later when *U-537* landed just a few miles north of our next stop at Port Burwell, at the entrance to Hudson Strait. There the Germans erected a land-based battery-operated radio station designed to automatically transmit weather data to Germany. Not until 1981 did the Canadian government learn of its existence through information provided by a former crew member of *U-537*.

At Port Burwell, the *Nascopie* had no floe ice to contend with. We made the short run across Hudson Strait to Resolution Island to unload much of the deck cargo of diesel oil for the *St. Roch*, which was expected to pass through soon. We were now into an area of ice packs and huge tidal changes. The *Nascopie* was into the elements she had been built for. Her hull of extra heavy duty five-eighths-inch steel plate was reinforced below the waterline with double plating, and at the waterline a broad one-inch-thick steel belt ran the length of the ship. Built into the sloping bow was a steel block or shoe for ploughing into ice packs, raising the ship up and breaking down the ice in a battering-ram effect that used the ship's weight as well as forward momentum to clear a passage.

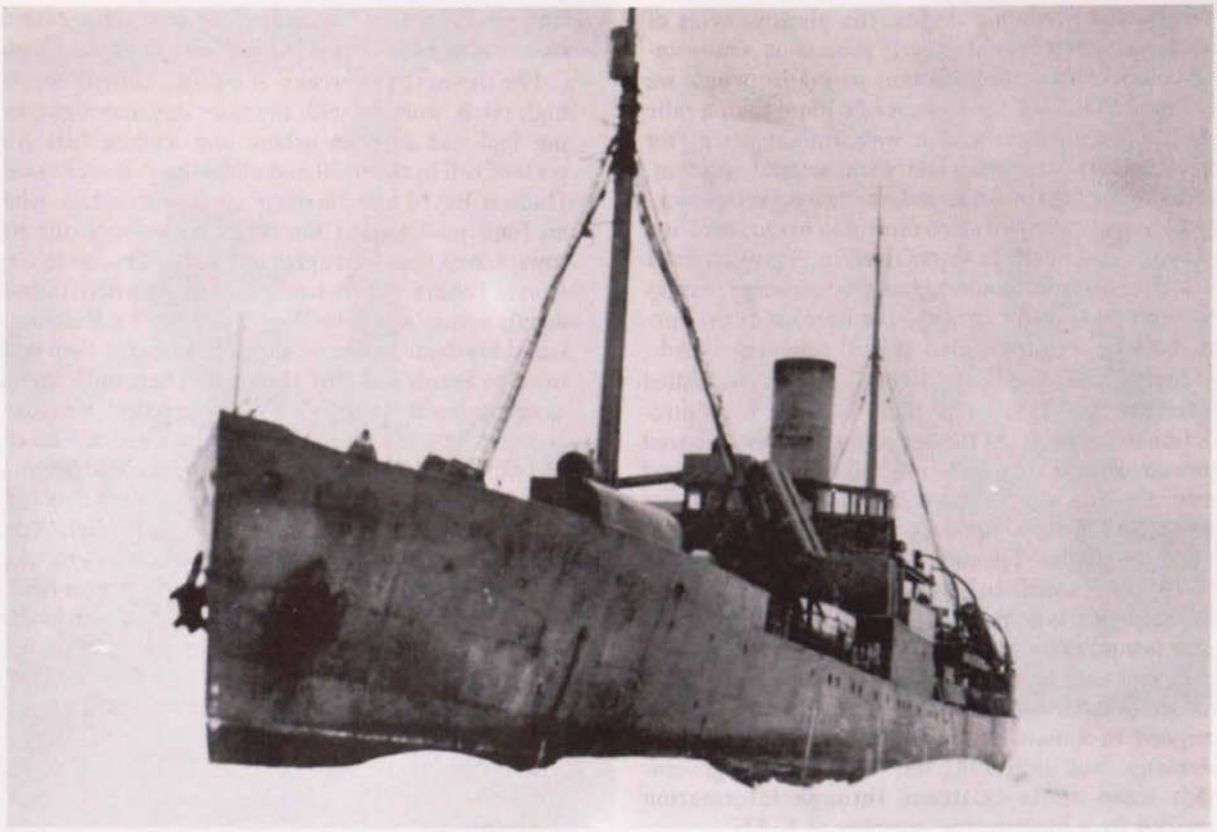
Pack ice is one thing, but Hudson Strait presented another, perhaps greater peril: appalling tides. Hudson Bay and Foxe Basin to the north form an "inland" ocean larger in area than Ontario. Twice each day this expanse tries to empty and refill itself through Hudson Strait, creating a river more than a hundred miles wide and more than five hundred miles long. At narrow points close to islands, currents run at eight knots. At certain places, the difference between high and low tide can be as much as 60 feet. The *Nascopie* had once narrowly avoided being swept onto the Button Islands just north of Port Burwell while stuck in an ice pack. In 1942, the strait was still largely uncharted. The captain approached each trading post with extreme caution, even though the *Nascopie* had a depth sounder.

For the next few weeks, the ship's activity went at high pitch, working with the tides day and night, taking fuel and supplies ashore and loading furs from ports of call in the strait and along the shores of eastern Hudson Bay: Lake Harbour on Baffin Island, where an Inuit pilot guided the *Nascopie* through the narrows; across the strait again to Sugluk, then on to Cape Dorset (where the *Nascopie* lies today many fathoms deep); across again to Wolstenholme, back across to Coral Harbour where we grounded briefly, then south to Cape Smith and Port Harrison. Then, on 7 August, having completed the first half of our patrol, we crossed Hudson Bay to Churchill where a trainload of coal and other supplies awaited us for the second and much longer half of our intended voyage. Loading took place night and day at breakneck speed. The High Arctic would soon be freezing up, and we had yet to travel more than 2,000 miles to reach Canada's most remote northerly settlement, Fort Ross, 400 miles north of the Arctic Circle, with supplies for the post and its Inuit hunters. Already we were afraid of being late. That half-speed convoy through the Gulf of St. Lawrence had cost us precious time.

As soon as possible we steamed north from Churchill to Chesterfield Inlet and then due east, stopping at Wolstenholme and Lake Harbour, and then across Hudson Strait to Cape Hopes Advance. Travelling 250 miles a day at 12 knots and bypassing all the normal ports of call along the east coast of Baffin Island, the *Nascopie* still hoped to reach Fort Ross before the freeze up. These were exciting moments, for we were operating where few other ships had ever sailed and only the *Nascopie* was an annual caller. This was the Queen of the Arctic's true domain. Her unique design gave her the range, cargo capacity, and ice-breaking capability to serve this vast region.

At the approaches to Fort Ross, in Prince Regent Inlet, our worst fears were realized: the *Nascopie* had arrived too late, perhaps 10 days too late. Ice packs which had broken up for a few brief weeks were starting to reconsolidate and our only exit was back north. For two days we battered through the floes toward the post. At 3 p.m. on the third day, a group of crew members led by two Newfoundland lightermen confronted Captain Smellie on the bridge with the ultimatum that unless he turned around by dusk the crew would no longer work the ship.

Perhaps the ghosts of the Franklin expedition lost here in the last century reminded the captain that there are old arctic commanders and there are bold arctic commanders, but none both old and bold. Anyway, the Newfoundlanders, a breed whose seamanship Smellie respected greatly, had told him what he already knew: his ship was in extreme danger of being frozen in the



Peter Candy Collection

"Nascopie" in heavy ice near Fort Ross, 1942.

ice where we sat. There were no ships within several thousand miles that could reach us and survive the ice, nor aircraft with adequate range to drop supplies. Even if a plane could reach us to remove passengers and crew, the surrounding sea ice was too rough for a landing.

We were tantalizingly close to Fort Ross. The captain knew that the post had extra rations and could survive for another year. He gave the turn-around order, and no charges were laid against the mutinous crewmen. [Editor's note: The following year, when the *Nascopie* again failed to reach Fort Ross, there was a dramatic air rescue. See *The Beaver*, Autumn 1980.]

We struggled free of the ice and on 20 September steamed north as it was impossible to proceed south. Luckily, no major ice blocked our passage from Prince Regent Sound. Even so, navigation was far from easy.

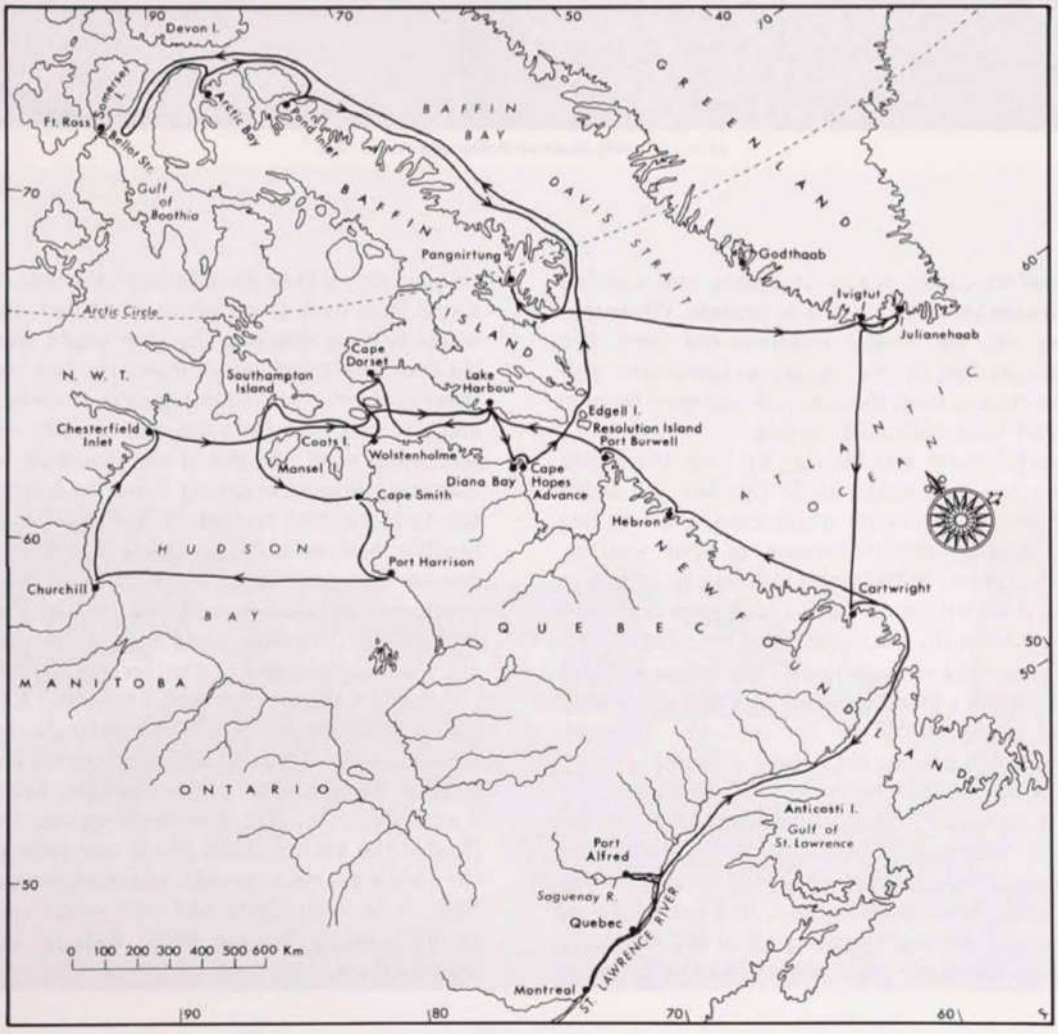
At Arctic Bay, the trading post on northern Baffin Island, which we reached on 22 September, we learned that the *St. Roch* had sailed through triumphantly more than a month before. We were sorry to have missed meeting her. However, Arctic Bay gave us a prime illustration of how much the *Nascopie*'s annual arrival meant to the native and imported residents of the trading posts, police detachments, missions, and hospitals that depended on her for all their needs — fuel, food, clothing, mail. Arctic Bay was then the most northerly "post office" in the world, so among the many bags of mail were pre-stamped envelopes which the postmaster processed for postmark collectors around the globe. Meanwhile, as the *Nascopie*'s barge unloaded a year's supplies and the post personnel dealt with a year's mail, we had a chance for the first time to meet the most isolated Inuit on our entire route. After packing the stores, they came on board for tea and biscuits. Full of laughter and good humour, they lived much as their ancestors had done, in contrast with the Labrador natives and other mainlanders who had given up many of their aboriginal ways. At the next stop after we rounded the top of Baffin Island and passed the settlement of Pond Inlet, the *Nascopie* again sent supplies to the beach and welcomed Inuit visitors.

Suddenly, amid the routine, came a sharp reminder that a war was on, particularly the U-boat reign of terror that we had slipped away from four months ago. A message from Ottawa ordered the *Nascopie* to another duty. We were to go to Greenland to pick up a load of cryolite, an ore used as a flux in aluminum manufacturing. Shipping losses, plus delays caused by

convoy scheduling, had created a critical shortage of this essential war material at the Aluminum Company of Canada plant at Arvida, Quebec. Diversion to Greenland was less than timely from the *Nascopie*'s point of view. After covering more than 10,000 miles, she was near the end of her range; supplies of fuel, fresh water, and food were running low. More especially, the threat of foul weather increased as winter drew near. Only too soon were the apprehensions of wary crewmen borne out.

After unloading mail and supplies at Clyde River and Pangnirtung, two posts further south on the Baffin Island coast, we steamed southeast across Davis Strait in two days. The few ports on Greenland, including our destination of Arsuk Basin, had recently come under the control of American forces. This sparsely-populated country was a protectorate of Denmark, which was now in German hands. The cryolite mine, located at Ivigtut up a fiord from Arsuk Basin, was a vital asset for the Allies, and the Americans guarded it closely against enemy intrusion. An anti-submarine net lay across the harbour's narrow entrance, a medium-sized camouflaged oil tanker acted as a tender for an armed sea-going salvage tug, and a Catalina flying boat patrolled the whole region.

When we arrived on 10 October other ships lay at anchor in the basin waiting to go up the fiord to load ore. Before we could take our turn, though, we had to refuel or we would never make it back to Canada. No coal could be had in Ivigtut, but we were told that coal and possibly food supplies existed at Julianehåb, further south along the southern tip of Greenland. Upon arrival there on 23 October we found the coal all right but no docking or loading facilities. We anchored in the well-protected harbour and contemplated the heap of coal, which was piled on the shore above the tideline; in this treeless land it appeared to be the village's winter fuel supply. How could it be brought on board quickly? Eskimo womanpower solved the problem. Walking along the planks laid at low tide, the women carried baskets of coal on their heads to form a continuous moving chain that dumped the load into a barge, which was then hauled off the beach at high tide and towed to the ship. The *Nascopie* then lowered



Peter Candy Collection

Ships sheltering in Arsuk Basin, Greenland, 1942.

a cluster of 45-gallon drums in a sling and winched the full drums aboard, a very slow process. While that was going on, we bought locally-raised lamb and freshly-caught fish in the village, and everyone welcomed the change from the salt pork and pilot biscuits that we had been reduced to eating.

A powerful storm was blowing up from the southwest as we left Julianehåb on 27 October and sailed back northward. It was not unexpected; this was late October, already into the season of foul weather. Nevertheless, we hoped to arrive at Arsuk Basin before dusk so as to identify ourselves to the salvage tug which would draw open the anti-submarine net. But on this fateful day we had no such luck. The storm increased in intensity all day as we careered north on a following sea. Dead empty except for the coal, the *Nascopie* corkscrewed down towering waves, at times yawing almost out of control. Daylight ended early, too late to make it to shelter. Captain Smellie had no choice but to turn west and head away from the coast for fear of his ship being driven against the rock-and-ice-bound shores. Against waves mounting mast-high 60 feet and more and swells running up to 400 feet long, he cut back the *Nascopie*'s engine in an attempt to ride out rather than drive through the seas. With freeboard from deck to waterline of 14 feet, the gigantic waves bearing down on the ship would seem to bury her completely and yet somehow the bow rose to meet them each time, half-submerging the foredeck. A deafening tumult rose from the alternatively roaring and screaming wind, the din of the pounding waves, and clattering objects breaking loose. In his 50 years at sea (and he had started in sailing ships), Captain Smellie had never experienced anything worse in storms. The gusts reached 100 miles an hour. In later years, he confided to a friend that at the time he doubted the *Nascopie* would survive. As an icebreaker she was not designed to weather open-ocean storms.

All night the storm raged unabated. Remarkably, our accommodation in the stern kept fairly dry. The crew's quarters forward had been abandoned the previous evening as soon as the *Nascopie* had turned on a westerly course. The seas tumbling over the bow had flooded the anchor chain locker and then spilled into the crew's quarters through an inspection panel in the floor. A deck ventilator had been swept away, adding to the flooding. No one could walk on the forward deck anyhow.

The scene on the morning of 28 October when we emerged from our quarters below decks aft to the comparative shelter of the deck house was as unreal as a dream. The ship had developed a starboard list. When she rolled, you could balance adroitly with one foot on the deck and the other on the wall all the while moving up and down 30 or 40 feet on the forward and backward pitches. As she quartered into the waves, scud swept across the port side while the more protected starboard side rolled rail under. It reminded us of *National Geographic* illustrations of clipper ships rounding the Horn. We sprinted up the starboard side, preparing to run the moment the ship rolled upright.

As the morning lengthened, things went from bad to worse. The ship could no longer hold her bow into the wind. Water washed over the port side, sloshed through the fiddley doors (designed more to let heat out of the boiler room than to keep out the sea), and spilled down onto the fireplates, rendering the floor too slippery to stand on with the pitching of the ship. The stokers could no longer shovel coal from the bunker hopper through the fire doors. The boiler pressure dropped. The engine stopped. The rudder, which was steam-assisted, had to be lashed to one side to keep it from flopping around. The auxiliary "donkey" boiler was kept going to provide lighting for the ship and power for the crucially-important pumps. We were now drifting helplessly, in risk of being driven back toward the Greenland coast, just what the captain had tried his best to avoid.

While he struggled on the bridge, a tragi-comedy took place below as crew members sought whatever protection and comfort they could find. In the galley where the coal-fired ranges were out and water dripped through the skylight, the only person was "Frenchie", a diminutive trimmer, who had taken refuge inside the coal box which had a good solid lid. In the engine room, strangely quiet, someone had slacked the bolts on the inspection hatch of the steam condenser and as a result the room filled with a cold clammy fog of condensed water vapour. Periodically a cascade descended through the skylights which could not be closed tightly because of decades of paint coatings. In the empty dining room chairs loosely tethered to the floor by brass chains performed a synchronized dance to the scope of their chains with each roll of the ship. The passenger quarters resembled a gymnasium except that it was the gym that was moving and the gymnasts

Julianehåb, Greenland, 1942.

Peter Candy Collection

who were trying to stay still, a tiring exercise apart from ducking flying objects.

We still had on board the two bishops (praying for everyone's safety, we hoped) and the government officials and other functionaries. The two gunners, our humourists, remained in our after quarters, sitting like crows on an upper bunk watching water slosh down the companion ladder and from other cabins to form a widening pool under the lower bunk.

Using the chief steward's gas stove, we attempted to rustle up something from the pantry for people to eat. The ship's fresh water tanks had been shaken up as if by a giant, frenzied barman. Years of rust scale and sediment ran from the taps as we drew the water into a bucket to let it settle before decanting the top half for tea. We warmed a little soup for Captain Smellie, who had been on the bridge for many hours without sleep or much to eat.

The chief steward's method of delivery was ingenious. He would place the soup container in a large napkin and bring the napkin corners up to form a sling which the steward would clench between his teeth to leave both hands free. As the ship rolled to the leeside, the starboard saloon door would steam and spurt water through every crack, but as she slowly rolled back to a semi-upright position, a helper would open the door and the soup-bearer would dash to the promenade deck ladder before the next roll. We took turns being the "outside" man.

Outside, on the third day of the storm, the situation became more bearable. The seas moderated slightly, and at the same time the stokers, who had never left the fireplates, never stopped trying to get steam up, succeeded in their labours. Chief stoker Snow became the hero of the hour. He had directed the efforts that kept the firebox bed of coals alive despite the dampening effect of the engine room fog.

Soon we were on our way again. We had not only survived but even had something to be thankful for. The hurricane-force winds, vicious though they were, had not been cold enough to deposit an unbalancing buildup of ice on the decks or superstructure. No one had been lost overboard or injured. A young galley boy had been laid low throughout, but few other people were seasick. This was peculiar, because the *Nascopie* rocked much more than ships designed differently from her: the freeboard was low, and she had no bilge keels or other formal stabilizers that would interfere with ice-breaking.

On the afternoon of 29 October the *Nascopie* sidled into Arsuk Basin looking like a scarred and wet alley cat. On the salt-encrusted superstructure, patches of loose paint blasted off by the wind ran red with rust. The ship also listed to starboard, and a motor lighter protruded over the side where 20 feet of railing had been sheared off. But at last we had reached shelter. Arsuk Basin, drab at the best of times, looked almost like paradise.

Among the ships at anchor waiting to load cryolite was a small Norwegian freighter with a school friend of ours aboard as a fireman. He had sailed in the *Nascopie* the previous year and, recognizing our battered ship and knowing we were aboard, came to spend the night with us. His freighter, under charter to the Aluminum Company, had left Port Alfred on the Saguenay River in mid-September with a highly-combustible cargo — dynamite for the mine and whisky for the miners. The convoy had been attacked by a U-boat near the Bay of Chaleur and two ships hit, but his volatile freighter had escaped.

Our friend's impression, without any specifics related to censorship, was that the war in the Gulf of St. Lawrence was not going well at all. In fact, the ace German commander Paul Hartwig of *U-517* sank one ship after another in September and October, including the corvette HMCS *Charlottetown*. The greatest loss was the passenger steamer *Caribou*, torpedoed during her regular run from Cape Breton Island to Newfoundland on 14 October. A single torpedo from *U-69* hit the *Caribou* amidships and sank her in less than four minutes with the loss of 136 lives, including 14 children. But for the efforts of her escort HMCS *Grandmère*, which picked up more than a hundred survivors, many more people would have died of exposure.

The story of the *Caribou* disaster went the rounds at Arsuk Basin and struck hard at the hearts of our passengers and crew. Many of the dead were known to our men, the Newfoundlanders especially. The full weight of official censorship could not hush up this sinking; radio stations and newspapers were full of the details. This was the only ship "officially" lost in the Gulf in 1942, all other reports being dismissed as loose talk or rumour. Consequently, nobody in the field including ships' captains could either quantify the devastation or determine whether it was being brought under control. Captain Smellie must have thought it was not under control, because at Arsuk Basin he initiated full lifeboat drill. Everyone was assigned to a particular lifeboat, the boats were lowered into the water, and we rowed around the ship to check for loose drain plugs and generally see that everything was in order.

Our turn came to steam up the fiord to the mine site. Big white lumps of cryolite soon began to tumble into the *Nascopie*'s hold, settling the ship so deep that there was barely six feet between deck and water. We left Arsuk Basin for the last time on 3 November, a pitch-black night, in an unwanted blaze of glory: the chimney caught fire. During the long weeks of waiting with slow-burning fires, notably the low-grade Julianehåb coal, soot accumulated inside the tall stack.

Peter Candy Collection

"Nascopie" waits to take on cryolite at Ivigtut, Greenland, 1942.

When the firebed built up and the boiler reached full pressure, just as we prepared to make a discreet and swift exit through the open submarine net under cover of darkness and thus elude any lurking U-boats, flames shot 20 feet into the air, lighting up the ship like day. All that was missing was a brass band. We were on our way home.

As we wallowed westward across the Labrador Sea, we faced into strong northwest gales and yet another menace. Wind-driven spray began to freeze on the decks and superstructure. Steam hoses and axes had to be used to reduce the buildup of the ice sheathings before they threatened the ship's stability. By now, some of those crew members who had left the Caribbean tankers fervently wished they had never seen the *Nascopie*. Day after day we pounded on, decks awash, to Cartwright on the Labrador coast, where we started to unload the barges on 9 November.

Next, we had to unload the ore. We sailed south to Belle Isle and followed the north shore past Anticosti Island. By the time we reached the Saguenay, navigation had ceased for the year. The frozen river posed no problem for the *Nascopie*. Instead of the growls of heavy ice-breaking which we had heard in the High Arctic, ice fragments clattered musically over the river's layer of ice as the bow sliced through. At Port Alfred the passengers disembarked while the ore was unloaded.

It seemed strangely quiet on the trip back down to Quebec City and on to Montreal where we arrived on 25 November. There the *Nascopie* had an appointment with Vickers shipyard for repairs and modification of her superstructure as a result of the storm damage. None of us lingered when she docked; rather, we quickly scrambled ashore. Only years later could we look back on the *Nascopie* voyage of 1942, contemplate coolly its place in the sweep of time, and say what a great experience it was. ♦

Peter Candy is a Vancouver businessman.

SENNEVILLE

Ruins in a secluded corner of Montreal Island tell a dramatic story of war and danger in old Quebec

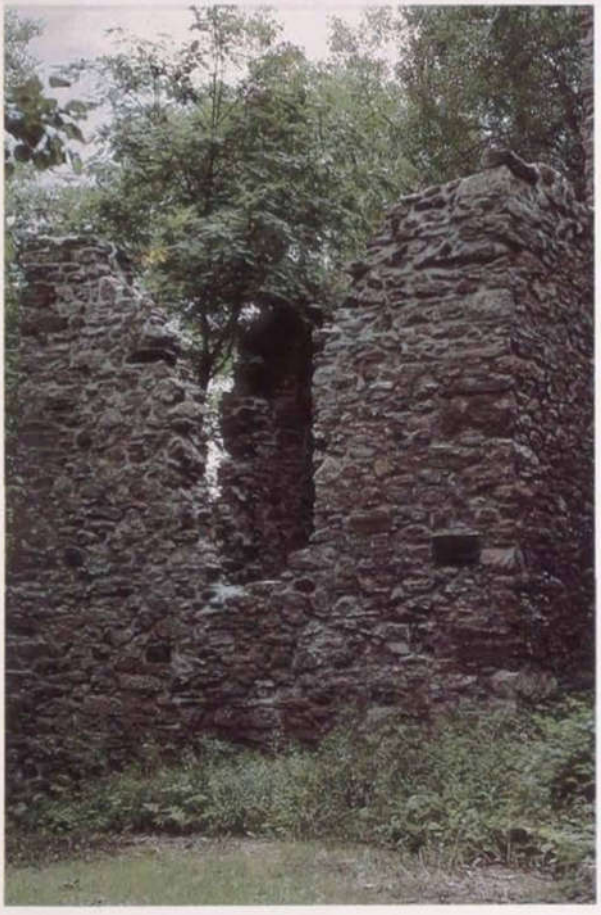
By MIKE THEILMANN

The study of history can often lead the curious reader down unexpected paths; and often the unexpected path can prove more rewarding than the more conventional routes of history. Such was the case in 1984, when a chance encounter put me on the trail of one of Canada's least known historic sites — the ruins of Fort Senneville.

I first stumbled across Fort Senneville while researching in an Ottawa library for a film script about Adam Dollard des Ormeaux, the famous seventeenth-century hero of New France. While idly leafing through a book pulled at random off the shelf, I suddenly came upon an aerial photo of the ruins of a small stone fort, comprising a walled courtyard, corner bastions, and the ruins of a manor house. Reading further, I discovered the fort and a mill tower on a nearby hill were all that remained of the seigneury of Senneville.

Military architecture has been a hobby of mine for many years, and I am familiar with most of the fortifications in Canada of any historical significance. Yet here were the remains of a seventeenth-century fort I had never heard of.

View of the southeast bastion.



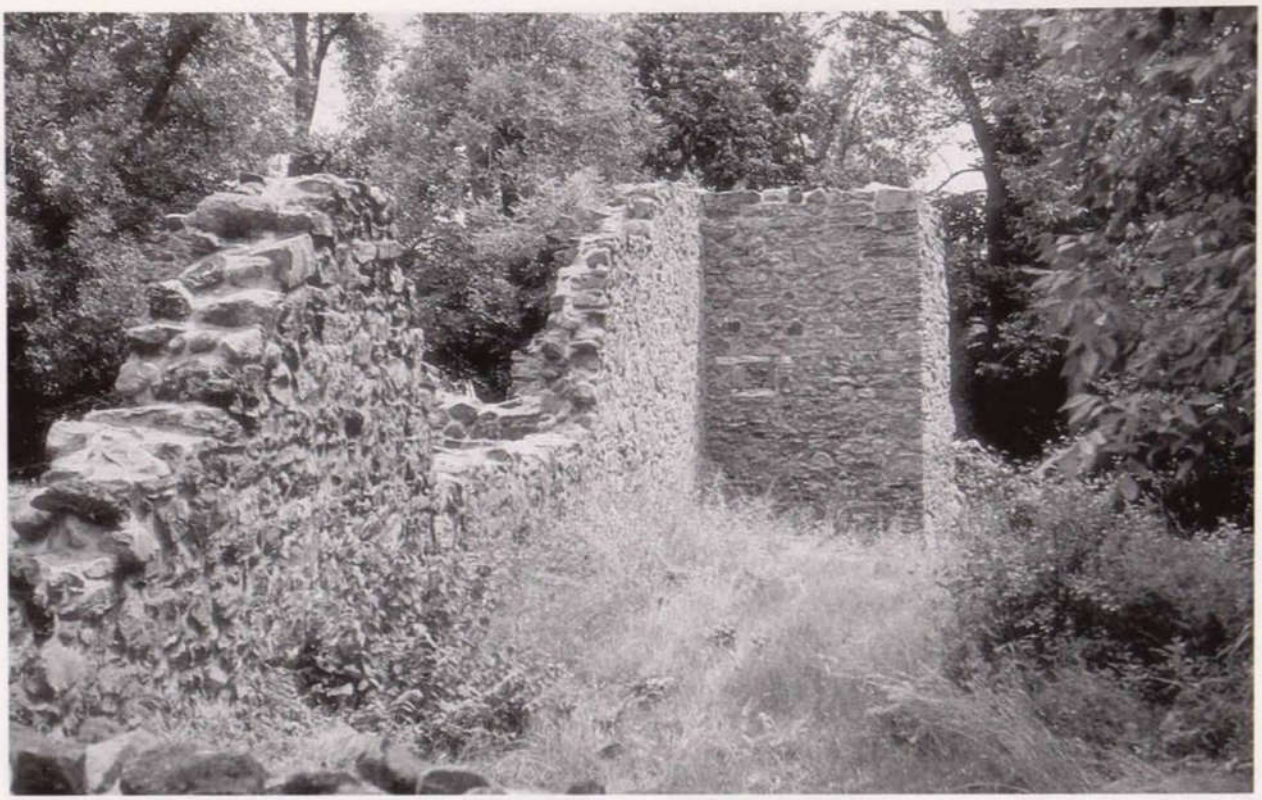
Opposite page: View of the southeast corner, with the remains of the manor house. Above: The mill tower.

The book, *Old Quebec in the Days Before Our Day*, written by Alexander Angus and published in 1949, also contained a fascinating account of the fort's history. Unfortunately, aside from a reference to "provincial archives", nowhere in his history did Angus mention the source for any of his original research material.

I spent the next few days digging through the library trying to confirm Angus' information. But apart from detail on some of the historical incidents and personalities mentioned, I did not find a single reference to Fort Senneville.

However, given the substantial remains of the fort and its colourful past, I thought it would be a relatively easy matter to track down more information. I could not have been more wrong. In the ensuing weeks I was to find Fort Senneville a historical will-o'-the-wisp.

Unfortunately, my most obvious step, contact with the author, had to be ruled out immediately. According to the preface of his book, Angus was killed in a plane crash in 1941. His book was published posthumously by his heirs in two limited editions.



View along what remains of the west wall to the southwest bastion.

Telephone calls to Parks Canada in Ottawa and Quebec City, the Quebec Ministry of Cultural Affairs, Heritage Montreal, Communauté Urbaine de Montreal, and the Canadian Centre for Architecture in Montreal, turned up virtually no information on the site. The only item of interest came from Parks Canada in Ottawa in the form of a report prepared in 1962 by a consulting restoration architect. The report contained a detailed description of the ruins, but virtually nothing on the history of the fort.

I decided the only option left was a visit to the fort itself. So armed with map, wife and borrowed car, I set out for Senneville one grey winter day in 1985.

Senneville is a wealthy, residential community on the west end of the Island of Montreal where the St. Lawrence and Ottawa rivers meet. The two rivers widen out into two large lakes — Lake St. Louis to the south and Lake of Two Mountains, where Senneville is located, to the north. Large estates line the shoreline of Lake of Two Mountains, and tree-shrouded laneways with imposing entrances discourage the casual visitor.

From Angus' description and photographs, I knew the fort had to be near the lakeshore. After an hour's fruitless search, I pulled off the road to re-check my bearings. By chance, my wife noticed a historical marker half fallen over in a ditch on the other side of the road. Closer scrutiny revealed a plaque which identified the land we were standing on as the original site of the seigneury of Senneville.

Scenting our goal, we drove down the nearest lane, which seemed to head toward the lakeshore. A quarter of a mile later, the trees opened out and there, through a curtain of snow, we could see the ruined walls and bastions of Fort Senneville.

In a modern house a stone's throw from the fort, I met the present-day owners of Fort Senneville, John and Jacqueline Hackne, a friendly couple in their seventies. The Hacknes were able to give me many interesting details about the fort, including the fact that Alexander Angus had been a local resident and that his family still lived nearby. More important, the Hacknes also told me that an archaeological dig under the direction of Dr. Donald Webster, Curator of the Canadiana Department of the Royal Ontario Museum, had been carried out on the site in the summer of 1971.

Shortly afterwards, I was able to contact Dr. Webster in Toronto. He was able to verify, based on evidence found during the dig, and from research his staff carried out in the City of Montreal Archives

(probably, along with the provincial archives in Quebec, the source of much of Angus' information), most of Angus' history of the fort.

With the information supplied by Webster, Angus, the Hacknes, and the little I had discovered during my own research, I was at last able to put together a complete picture of the fort's history.

The original owner of the site was a retired captain of the Carignan regiment with the resounding name of Michel-Sidrac du Gue de Boisbriant. In 1672 he received a grant of land at Bout-de-l'Ile on the extreme western tip of the Island of Montreal. He built a wooden trading post and rather immodestly called it Boisbriant.

Strategically located near the confluence of the Ottawa and St. Lawrence rivers, the post was well-placed to take advantage of the traffic in furs which came down both waterways.

Other entrepreneurs appreciated the commercial possibilities and in 1679, Boisbriant was purchased by two merchants from Montreal. One was Charles Le Moyne, father of the famous Pierre Le Moyne d'Iberville, one of the most renowned soldiers in the history of New France. The other was Jacques Le Ber, Le Moyne's brother-in-law and business partner. Of the two, it was Le Ber who changed Boisbriant from a ramshackle trading post into a seigneury of some importance.

Jacques Le Ber was born in France, near Rouen, in 1633 and arrived in New France in 1657 where he took up residence in the frontier settlement of Montreal. Shrewd, brave and ambitious, he soon proved himself an able soldier and trader. He took part in several expeditions against the Iroquois and made a fortune in the fur trade. A resourceful man, he branched out into other areas of trade engaging in the cod fisheries and trading with the West Indies. He was also one of the first men to try to transplant European fruit trees to New France. By the 1680s, his business ventures with Le Moyne had made him one of the richest and most influential men in the colony.

When Le Moyne died in 1686, Le Ber purchased his share in Boisbriant from his widow and renamed it Senneville, after a small town near his birthplace in France. With characteristic energy, he immediately ordered the construction of a stone mill tower to provide the settlers at Senneville with a shelter in case of Indian attack.

His foresight was soon justified. The following year the Iroquois raided the seigneury. After a brief clash, they were driven off, having lost several warriors. Apparently undaunted, they attacked again in 1691. The colonists, and in particular the miller's wife, put up a stout resistance but the Iroquois managed to set the tower on fire before being driven back into the woods.

Perhaps as a result of the 1691 raid, Le Ber decided

National Archives of Canada

Benedict Arnold: Destroyer of Senneville.

to improve the defences of the seigneury. Sometime between 1692 and 1693 he ordered the construction of a high stone-walled courtyard flanked by corner bastions. An inventory made in 1693 mentions the fort as being armed with several pieces of light artillery, including *pierriers* or light swivel guns. Later, though exactly when is not certain, construction was started on a three-storey manor house at the south end of the courtyard. According to Angus it was still under construction in 1703. As evidence he mentions an entry in the register of Lachine for 5 August 1703. The entry describes how Le Ber's master mason, one Bonnier, fell from a scaffold while working in the cellar of the manor house. He subsequently died of his injuries while being taken by canoe to Lachine to receive last sacraments. When work was completed in 1704, the fort must have been a sight to give pause to any Iroquois raider.

While the fort was under construction, Le Ber, in keeping with his growing power and prestige, purchased letters of nobility from Louis XIV. Perhaps mindful of his new works program, he took for himself and his heirs the title of Sieur Le Ber de Senneville.

Ironically some of the money used to pay for the title probably came from shady business dealings. A

Sir John Abbott: A Victorian villa.

major concern of the French government during Le Ber's day was the illegal traffic in furs between the merchants of New France and English to the south. Never one to miss a profit, Le Ber, despite official warnings, took part in this trade. Fort Senneville, located away from prying eyes in Montreal and Quebec, probably witnessed a lot of clandestine activity as contraband cargoes were shipped south to Albany.

The archaeological excavations of 1971 turned up some surprises. In the northwest bastion of the fort a number of carved Indian stone pipes were found, some only partially finished. According to Webster, this almost certainly indicates that at some point Indians were living in the bastion. Another puzzling find was the discovery of a large harpoon head carved from walrus bone. According to Webster it must have somehow come to the fort from way up in northern Quebec.

Jacques Le Ber probably never spent much time at Senneville, preferring the comforts of his homes in Quebec, and Montreal where he died in 1706. After his death, Senneville enjoyed a peaceful existence, remaining in the possession of the Le Ber family until 1757. The seigneury then passed through several hands before reappearing on the historical scene during the American Revolution.

In 1775 Benedict Arnold invaded Canada at the head of an American army and laid siege to the City of Quebec. Another army led by General Richard Montgomery moved up to join him after first capturing Montreal. Early on the morning of 31 December, during heavy snow and hail, they launched a disastrous attack against the city. Montgomery was killed and Arnold was wounded. Short on supplies and threatened by British reinforcements, Arnold was forced to withdraw his disheartened and disease-ridden troops to Montreal.

In May of 1776, he received word that an American post at Cedar Rapids on the St. Lawrence River, had surrendered to a British force under the command of a Captain George Forster. One of Forster's militia officers was Jean-Baptiste Testard de Montigny, the owner of Fort Senneville.

Arnold set out to rescue the roughly 400 American captives who had been taken to Fort Senneville. Forster got wind of his approach and with prisoners in tow, retreated across the Lake of Two Mountains to Vaudreuil. There the two forces met and after a brief skirmish a frustrated Arnold was forced to fall back on the deserted Fort Senneville.

That night he was contacted by messengers from Forster and an exchange of prisoners was arranged (Arnold had prisoners of his own in Montreal). The next day Arnold returned to Montreal but in a final gesture of defiance, or perhaps frustration, he looted and then burnt the fort. Montigny returned to find his home a smouldering ruin.

Based on archaeological evidence from the 1971 dig, it is clear that this final fire was extremely destructive. Melted and distorted window glass, the scorched appearance of some ceramics, the complete dissolution of exposed lime mortar and wall plaster, particularly in the manor house, all point to a fire of great intensity and heat.

Arnold's vengeance perhaps saved the fort from a more ignoble end. During the excavations Webster also found evidence that the fort had already fallen on hard times. Brass trade kettles were discovered which had been flattened and cut into strips. The strips must have been used to patch holes in the roof and as flashing around leaky chimneys.

The residents of Fort Senneville also had little concern for hygiene. Scattered around the fort Webster found the skeletal remains of deer, bears, pigeons, fish, dogs, and most repulsive of all — great numbers of rats. The picture of the fort in its final days is a gloomy one; damp, dirty and infested with vermin.

After the fire the fort faded from the pages of history and, like many a ruin before it, became a convenient quarry for farmers and others in search of building stone.

Eventually the land on which the fort and mill tower are located came into the possession of Sir John Abbott, (Prime Minister of Canada in 1891-92). He built a Victorian villa on the site and used it as his summer home.

National Archives of Canada

The Death of Montgomery by John Trumbull. The American general was shot through the face and legs while attacking Quebec City in a snowstorm.

He in turn sold the property to Sir Edward Clouston, first vice-president of the Bank of Montreal. Clouston was the son of James Stewart Clouston, a chief factor with the Hudson's Bay Company, and was born at Moose Factory on James Bay. Given Fort Senneville's historic fur trade associations, it seems fitting that Clouston was the man who saved what remained of Fort Senneville for future generations. He consolidated the remaining masonry of the fort and mill tower, preventing further decay. He also added a new roof to the mill tower giving it a mediaeval look. According to the Hacknes, he was also responsible for placing a historical plaque (which can still be seen today), on the wall of the southeast bastion.

The property has remained in the Clouston family to the present day. Sir Edward's estate was eventually divided among his three granddaughters, one of whom is Jacqueline Hackne. One of her other sisters, who lives in Sir John Abbott's former home, now owns the land where the mill tower is located. The Hacknes have continued the tradition of maintaining the ruins, and on a number of occasions they have hired experienced masons to work on the walls. Though few people visit the site, they still welcome the chance visitor wanting to see the ruins.

Today, Fort Senneville slumbers quietly by the lakeshore, a historical backwater left behind by the tide of history. Shrouded in trees and shrubbery, the ruins have the type of romantic charm more commonly associated with the ivy-clad castles of Europe. It seems ironic that from the fort one can hear the muted roar of traffic crossing the Lake of Two Mountains on the Trans-Canada Highway — a scant quarter of a mile separating the twentieth century from the seventeenth. But for the casual visitor who by chance or design stumbles across the site, the ruins bear mute witness to over three centuries of turbulent Canadian history. ♦

Mike Theilmann is an Ottawa writer.

Journey to the North

THE NEW NORTH

By Agnes Deans Cameron, edited by David Richeson. Western Producer Prairie Books, Saskatoon, 1986. 315 pp., illus. $15.95 paper.

By David F. Pelly

The New North seems a strange title for a book presented today, based on a journalist's observations in 1908. The North we read about in this chronicle is that experienced by Agnes Deans Cameron, who was among the first women to travel as far north as the Arctic Ocean — though *not* "the first white woman to travel to the Canadian Arctic" as the cover note declares.

Her purpose, in the trip and subsequent book, was to examine the commercial frontier, in her words, "awaiting that multitude whose coming footsteps it takes no prophet to hear". Convinced that large-scale development was imminent, she wanted to see the unexploited Northwest, while at the same time — like every journalist, even today, who focuses on Canada's northern wilderness — promoting its forthcoming change and "development".

For us today, Cameron's re-issued account offers a series of vivid snapshots — perhaps the first taken with a feminine eye — of the Northwest as it was early in this century. For that alone it is a good read, though now it stands primarily as a travelogue. Her route took her north from Edmonton, "the city of contrasts; the ox-cart dodges the automobile; in the track of French heel treads the moccasin; the silk hat salutes the Stetson". First she descended the Athabasca and Slave Rivers to Great Slave Lake, on a series of scows and river steamers. Then, aboard the newly launched HBC steamer *Mackenzie River,* she took passage down the great river to the delta and the Arctic Ocean.

Hers is not the story of Mina Hubbard or Lady Clara Vyvyan, who took paddle in hand to tackle the North, or even that of Elizabeth Taylor, an American, who preceded Cameron to the Mackenzie Delta by much the same route in 1892. The author of *The New North* travelled in relative comfort, but as a result she had the time to turn her practised journalist's eye to the passing sights. Her descriptions of the people, the small frontier settlements, and the land are all so good that they remain effective eighty years later. As David Richeson, who edited this re-issued volume, says in his introduction, "it serves as a benchmark in time permitting comparison with what changes have taken place and what has stayed the same."

In fairness it must be granted that Cameron's descriptions — as her contemporary, arctic explorer Vilhjalmur Stefansson criticized — reflect views which we have come to regard as romantic notions of the noble savage and his wilderness. But she can be forgiven that, if only because the detail of her portrayal *seems* real to the reader. It is the esteemed art of any good travel writer to take the reader along with

Agnes Deans Cameron (right) and companion on the site of old Fort McLeod, from "The New North".

them on the journey, and this she has accomplished so well that it still works decades later.

As we travel with Cameron we meet the traders and the trappers, the Indians and the Eskimos, the priests and the police — all as living personalities whom our correspondent actively engages. We feel her reactions to the changing landscape and the environment as she progresses northward. And we learn, as she learns, about the fox (the major object of the fur trade at the time), the wood bison, the white pelican, the northern phalarope, the caribou, and the mosquitoes — to name but a few of the species she examines with personal curiosity.

There is an interesting tension between her view of the natural environment — very much based on her agrarian heritage — and the relationship she recognizes the natives have with the land. Theirs is a hunter's perspective, so very different from her own (and from ours). In some ways she was ahead of her time in her understanding of "white" (southern) impact on the North. "Not all the real things of life," she wrote, "are taught to the Cree by the Christian". It is, in part, this fundamental insight which has lent to *The New North* the quality to endure the years.

David F. Pelly is a writer and adventurer who has travelled extensively in the Canadian North.

McGillivray's Little Book

THE NORTH WEST COMPANY IN REBELLION
Simon McGillivray's Fort William Notebook, 1815

Edited and introduced by Jean Morrison. Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society, Thunder Bay, 1988. 50 pp. $5.00 plus $1.25 postage and handling from the Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society, 219 South May Street, Thunder Bay, Ontario, P7E 1B5.

By Barry Gough

Simon McGillivray was a Highland-born London merchant who in the year that his Fort William Notebook was written was virtually lord over all he surveyed. He owned most of the North West Company's London shares, and he possessed a goodly portion of those of the Montreal-based partners. Only his brother William held more in Canada. Simon was the fixer *par excellence,* nothing of importance in the affairs of the North West Company passed across his desk or was discussed at the council boards of the organization without his careful scrutiny evaluating it for its effect on the profit and power of the concern.

Simon McGillivray came by this authority naturally. He, like his brothers William and Duncan, had been brought into the company by their famous uncle Simon McTavish. Subsequent to the uncle's death in 1804, nephews Simon and William had risen in the inner circles of the company (Duncan died in 1808). Important concerns brought Simon McGillivray to Fort William on no less than three occasions, and on that of his 1815 visit the wintering partners were "in rebellion".

What were the nature and reasons for this discontent? First, the Columbia enterprise of the company, which combined David Thompson's explorations of the Columbia River watershed and the expedition of the Nor'Westers' ship *Isaac Todd* to the mouth of that same river, had added to the financial burdens of the wintering partners. Second, in Athabasca, Hudson's Bay Company traders were posing a formidable competition. This seemed likely to increase under the schemes of an ex-Nor'Wester Colin Robertson who was urging the Bay traders to adopt the techniques of their rivals. Third, the Selkirk settlement menaced the vital pemmican provisions of the interior trade. Besides these problems, the American John Jacob Astor had cornered the supply of premium tobacco — an essential for conducting trade with the natives.

From the founding of the Red River Settlement in 1811 the Nor'Westers had viewed Lord Selkirk's colony as a threat to their survival. In 1812, Simon McGillivray had warned that the Hudson's Bay Company was "a mere machine in the hands of Lord Selkirk" and must be "driven to abandon it". Now McGillivray's plans were bearing their own difficulties because some of the wintering partners had minds of their own: Dr. John McLoughlin, for instance, was not to be told where he would serve, but would decide for himself. Duncan Cameron, who had raised for the company a Corps of Canadian Voyageurs and had induced some Selkirk settlers to desert, had now been displaced in his authority by Archibald Norman McLeod, another strong-headed Nor'Wester, who not only was the new colonel of the Corps but was Justice of the Peace for the Indian Territories and the man who issued warrants for the arrest of those responsible for the pemmican embargo: Miles Macdonell, governor of Assiniboia, and John Spencer, its sheriff. The enmities and jealousies were acute among all these persons and others besides who gathered for the annual Fort William rendezvous. As Robertson reported correctly to Selkirk, "The North [West Company] is now ripe for a rebellion, their finances are at the lowest ebb, their promises to the Young Gentlemen are nearly

exhausted, the American War and the rigid economy they have pursued, since the Fur Trade has become their own, has reduced their Inventories in Athabasca so low, and raised their Indian standard so high, that the natives cannot kill a sufficient quality of Beaver to supply their wants".

The 1815 Fort William rendezvous was a gathering of disaffected and disgruntled interior partners, and Simon McGillivray was being brought to account. One by one the complaints were voiced. One by one the traders made their charges, defended their positions, and adjusted their strategies. "The business of the season had a very stormy aspect at its commencement", wrote Simon McGillivray in this notebook, "but it has subsided into a calm and we part very good friends, having written letters to the Interior and completed every other arrangement that appeared requisite". Food, drink, dancing and comradeship had played a part. So too had the clear-thinking Simon and his strategy of responding to the needs of the interior partners on whom all things depended. In the future lay the horrors of the affair at Seven Oaks, the injunctions of the British Government, and the union of the Nor'Westers with their ancient Bay rivals. For the moment, at the conclusion of the rendezvous, McGillivray was of the opinion that it would be business as usual.

Jean Morrison has edited this important document with care and skill. Her introduction moves the reader through the tortuous river channels of Nor'Wester business practice. She appends a useful Who's Who, which updates considerably the 1934 list of W. Stewart Wallace. Not least among the value of this work is the fact that McGillivray's memoranda comprise the only extant diary kept by a North West Company shareholder during an annual meeting. They indicate the inter-trader tensions that the usual minutes do not, and cannot reveal. Minutes for fourteen of these meetings have survived, and were published by the Champlain Society under the editorship of Wallace. As Jean Morrison rightly observes, Simon McGillivray's Notebook allows us to "eavesdrop into private conversations, assess personality traits and conflicts, and sense the tensions generated from within and without which eventually tore the company apart. Long, lonely winters in wilderness outposts made avid gossips of the Nor'Westers. As seen, Simon encouraged this attribute for his own purposes. He also recorded what he heard, to the delight of readers generations later". We are in debt to Jean Morrison for this excellent contribution to fur trade documentary studies, and more particularly for her contributions to the study of the history of a financial concern whose intricate and perplexing organization was at once the source of its strength and the basis of its demise.

Barry Gough is the author of a number of works on the history of Canada and the British Empire. His edition of "The Journal of Alexander Henry the Younger, Volume 1: The Red River and Missouri Rivers, 1799 - 1806" has recently been published by the Champlain Society. He teaches at Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, Ontario.

Inuit Traditions

By Olive Patricia Dickason

INUIT ART
An Anthology

Introduction by Alma Houston. Watson & Dwyer, Winnipeg, 1988. 128 pp., illus. $22.50.

The reaction to Inuit art, when it first appeared on the markets of the world in the 1950s, was of instantaneous appreciation coupled with the conviction that this was the swan song of a dying culture. The general attitude was buy now, because this art will not be around for long. Today, forty years later, it is flourishing more strongly than ever as it has become recognized as one of the world's important art forms. It has done so because of the strength of that most ancient, and still strongest, of Inuit traditions: adapt to survive. Art that can be correlated to modern styles may not be found in archaeological digs, but Inuit art is certainly present, dating back 4,000 years. Even as it is doing at a faster rate today, it has evolved through the ages. As Robert McGhee observes, Inuit art has developed its own traditions as it goes along.

This anthology of thirteen articles, 11 of which were originally published in *The Beaver* between 1972 and 1984, surveys this scene and embellishes it with beautiful colour illustrations. What emerges is an attractive kaleidoscope of a multi-faceted artistic world with a message: there is much more to Inuit art than the art itself. If so far it has survived the ups and downs of its contextual cultures, there is no guarantee that this will always be so: the challenges never cease, and those posed by an austere, not to say harsh, climate and ecology may not be so severe as those posed by an even less accommodating marketplace.

From the overview of Alma Houston's introduction, the anthology opens with McGhee insightfully tracing out the history of human habitation in the Arctic, and the subsequent appearance of art (pp. 12-29). For thousands of years following the retreat of the land glaciation, the Arctic remained uninhabited "not through lack of food resources, but because the human knowledge needed to survive the winter in this bleak land was lacking". The step that took northern hunters from the protection of the northern forests to face the rigours of the open tundra appears to have been taken in northeastern

Siberia; perhaps, McGhee observes, what this involved was a change of attitude "which placed a higher value on being well fed than on being warm and dry". In contrast to Amerindians, who treated hunger as a joke but who were greatly inconvenienced by cold and wet, the greatest fear of the Inuit was not the cold, "but inadequate supplies of food". The tundra, with its dense seasonal congregations of wild life, presented a hunting situation that in some ways was better than that of the forests to the south. These early peoples may not have produced many carvings or engravings, but their tools were carefully enough made to approach "what we would call an art form". The carving of animals and the occasional human form developed during the later Dorset culture, which dates to the first millenium B.C., and which dominated the Arctic for 2,000 years or more. About 1,000 years ago the Dorset gave way to the invading Thule, ancestors of modern Inuit. These events did not witness continuous cultural development, nor a steady evolution of art: periods of growth were interspersed with periods of decline. The great variability of prehistoric artistic expression indicates that such activity could have derived from different sources of inspiration and developed for different reasons. In any event, the Inuit artistic heritage is "marked by diversity and occasional florescence rather than gradual and uniform development".

Despite such fluctuations in activity, continuity is evident in themes and subject matter, according to Jean Blodgett, author of four of the anthology's articles. In her review of historic Inuit art (pp. 21-29), she writes that this continuity has carried through to today, even as the Inuit adapted and utilized novel themes, materials, and techniques to produce works for a new purpose.

This development was not initially encouraged by Europeans, who did not at first appreciate Inuit art. As late as the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Europeans were less than impressed: such eminent anthropologists as Franz Boas and Diamond Jenness felt that the Inuit carvings of their days were not on a par with earlier work, and that artistic activity was declining to the point of dying. According to Blodgett, this reflected the current European attitude rather than the quality of the work. During that period, she writes, "Inuit made a wide variety of artifacts, characterized by sensitivity and feeling for media, design, and colour, an attention to the significant and meaningful detail, ingenuity and imagination, as well as an overall technical expertise. Such characteristics are not unique to the historic period; they are equally prevalent in other periods of Inuit art history". Transition and continuity have been constants.

"Woman" by artist Oonark and printer Mannik, from "Inuit Art".

In today's world, carving has a significance akin to hunting for the Inuit, according to Marybelle Myers in her perceptive article on the Iyaituk brothers (pp. 64-75). Both activities "are integral to survival, culturally as well as physically, in a way that wage labour can never be". When not hunting, a carver carves, a natural rhythm centered on obtaining food, hunting directly and carving indirectly by providing the wherewithal to purchase bullets and gasoline. It is a way of life dependent upon the supply of game and an active market. Of the two, the market is the most precarious: in the words of Nutaraaluk Iyaituk, "If people stop buying carvings, the way we live will pass away. We'll not be Inuit any more". The fear is solidly based in reality, as the market for Inuit art has softened since its peak in 1975. As the cash flow dwindles, the first reaction is to revert to the old, self-sustaining ways: dog teams, for instance, can be more practical than skidoos for transport, as the dogs live off the land. As long, that is, as the food resources continue.

This fragility is recognized even by those artists who have moved with changing times to work with non-traditional media, such as paper. The instantaneous success of prints in the 1950s later led a leading artist with the medium, Pitseolak, to observe: "I am making my living with paper that tears, and I depend so much on it!" (Mary M. Craig, pp. 56-63). For a people who have always had to cope with uncertainty, that also is the continuation of a tradition.

In other areas as well, change has been the order of the day: for instance, artists are now creating their own individual styles, a development that runs counter to the Inuit convention of not making one's self personally conspicuous. (Myers, pp. 76-83). The work of some artists such as Oonark, Papialook, and Mattiusi Iyaituk are easily recognizable even by the uninitiated, even as they manage to remain within the general stylistic framework of Inuit art.

Closely related to style is the question of themes. What sells are "traditional" subjects, most of which relate to a vanished way of life. There is no objection to non-traditional media — appliqued and embroidered wall hangings, woven tapestries and prints, have found ready, even enthusiastic, acceptance. (Charlotte and Edward Lindgren, pp. 112-117; Sheila Butler, pp. 94-99). But the themes must be seen as Inuit, and in the terms of the marketplace, that means the pre-contact hunting way of life. Works expressing aspects of the contemporary world — such as the carefully crafted primus stove in ivory illustrated on page 21 — do

not have buyer appeal. As Blodgett points out (pp. 84-93), Inuit Christian art is vigorous, but stays in the North as it is not accepted in the south as traditional. Incidentally, it should be noted that missionaries, far from following "hard on the heels of traders" in the subarctic, as Blodgett maintains, did not show up for a century after the establishment of the Hudson's Bay Company, and then far away on the Labrador coast. They were not present at HBC posts on the Bay until early in the nineteenth century.

Rounding out this readable and very informative collection is Sheila Butler's light-hearted description of establishing print-making at Baker Lake (pp. 101-111); Betty Bell's reminiscences as a volunteer buyer for the Gallery Shop of the Vancouver Art Gallery (pp. 119-125); and Mary Craig's short piece on the care of prints (p. 100).

While this anthology is careful not to claim to be definitive, it is a very good overview of the Inuit art scene, its astonishing successes and current problems. Already, Inuit lifestyles are far removed from the "traditional" way in which so much of Inuit art is locked. As the gap widens even further, Inuit ingenuity is once more being taxed, as it has so often been in the past, to find new responses and new forms of expression that will meet the new needs, yet still be uniquely theirs. If their historic record is any indication, they will rise to the challenge.

Olive Patricia Dickason teaches at the University of Alberta and is author of "Indian Arts in Canada" (1972).

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Life on the Frontier

By Tom Saunders

ARMY WITHOUT BANNERS
By John Beames. Western Producer Prairie Books, Saskatoon, 1988. 304 pp. $16.95 paper.

There is a tendency among today's post-modernist academics to decry Canada's literary past, which they assure us is little more than a cultural desert. They prefer today's poems (most of which, even to the educated layman, are unintelligible) to anything that has gone before. It is futile to suggest that there is nothing in the works of today's poets to surpass the best of such earlier practitioners as Archibald Lampman, Duncan Campbell Scott or the late E. J. Pratt; and for the novel they have nothing but scorn. They belittle the so-called sentimentalities of Nellie McClung and the imperialism and muscular Christianity of Ralph Connor (which they hold up as horrible examples) and are content to leave it at that.

But, as the firm of McClelland and Stewart (through its New Canadian Library series) has shown, Canada's literary past has not been quite the cultural desert that the post-modernists would have us believe. They have discovered the writings of Frederick Philip Grove, Sinclair Ross and others (though, in Grove's case, one suspects that the revival of academic interest is not unrelated to recent discoveries about him as a person). They have even discovered Robert Stead's novel, *Grain*, which contains perhaps the best description of life in rural Manitoba during the first 20 years of this century.

But there are other early novels with a Western setting that McClelland and Stewart has missed, among them *Army Without Banners* by John Beames, with its vivid descriptions of pioneer experience in northern Saskatchewan during the same period as Stead's *Grain*. Like *Grain*, it is in the popular, rather than the academic, tradition; but it has insights into human nature and an ironic humour that the more academic novels lack. And it certainly cannot be accused of being a romanticized or sentimentalized portrayal of pioneer life.

It is a life that the author knew only too well at first hand. Born in India, where his father had served in the British army, he was brought to Canada at the age of 14. His father had filed on a homestead north of Prince Albert, but it was the sons who ran the farm. To aug-

The University of Calgary Press

ROLAND GISSING: THE PEOPLES' PAINTER

by Max Foran with Nonie Houlton

"By his own admission, he (Roland Gissing) was less an artist than an incurable romantic with a life-long love affair with the beauty of the west;...Though never honourably recognized in formal art circles, Roland Gissing was, nevertheless, an accomplished painter who, through the graphic simplicity of his canvases, evoked a wide-spread affinity with his own affectionate and tranquil vision of the land." Max Foran

Published December 1988; xi + 74 pp (hc) including 27 color and 17 B&Ws
List price: $34.95* + P&H (*In US dollars outside of Canada.)

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ment the family income, young John "worked out" as lumberjack, mill hand and trapper, and even hauled freight by dog team and horses on winter trails to remote Hudson's Bay posts.

It is from these experiences, and his observation of the fortunes — and misfortunes — of pioneering neighbours, that he draws his material. And he uses it well. He combines a stern detachment with a profound sympathy for his characters which enables him to view them objectively and make them at times the butt of his ironic humour without giving offence. He deflates their illusions without losing his basic admiration, and gives the reader the impression that he is dealing with real persons in real-life situations.

The main characters in the novel are Billy and Maggie Clovelly and their nearest neighbours, an English family named Kent. The Kents have come from a cultured background, but Billy and Maggie are more typical of the large number of relatively unlettered people who thronged to the free land offered by the Canadian government to those who would dare the frontier.

Billy especially is typical of such characters, with his flavourful language and his poor opinion of such people as lawyers, bankers, implement salesmen and preachers (all of whom he considered vultures preying on the hard-working farmer), and his complete mistrust of anything and anyone (especially politicians in Ottawa) that savours of the effete East. He and Maggie are remarkable for their hardihood and basic goodness of heart, but they are not given to any implausible graces of mind or manner. The author describes their triumphs and disasters, their follies and occasional shrewdness, with a sure, if ironic, touch. Through them we are introduced to the everyday practicalities of homestead life.

From time to time the reader is made aware of the battle of the sexes — of Maggie's wiles in overcoming Billy's arguments and winning him to her way of thinking till she obtains some of the amenities that make for a less primitive way of life. But victory in the last battle belongs to Billy. He is the born frontiersman and, as the land around his homestead becomes more populated, he feels hemmed in. He feels the lure of yet another frontier — in the Peace River country — where he envisions his older sons and himself filing for adjacent homesteads, and so keeping pesky neighbours at a distance. By novel's end he has arranged to sell his quarter-section to the Kents, who have been increasing their holdings, and reluctantly Maggie (with their brood of children) agrees to go with him.

Throughout, the reader is made aware of the rhythm of the seasons. Perhaps more than in any other novel of this period we find descriptions of flora and fauna, of bird and animal life, of summer heat and winter cold, including the fierceness of the blizzards that plagued Billy and his companions during their freighting expeditions in an endeavour to earn enough money for clothing and groceries till they would get the hoped-for benefit of the next summer's crop.

We are introduced to the type of social life that sprang up in a frontier community and we see something of the mingling of the races in a new land, with its clash of cultures, languages and manners; and, through these things, we see the first signs of the development of a distinct prairie society, where all are equal because all have nothing — nothing except hardship, and an enduring hope.

Throughout, there is little to indicate that Billy and Maggie, or even the Kents, realize that they are part of the army without banners that will change the Western frontier forever; and, in the novel, that is as it should be. It is only in retrospect that we see what they were and what they accomplished.

Army Without Banners was first published in England — by Ernest Benn Limited of London — in 1931. For more than half a century it has endured an undeserved obscurity. Western Producer Prairie Books is to be commended on its republication as one of its Spectra titles. It has the benefit of an excellent introduction by Dick Harrison.

Tom Saunders is a poet and the former literary editor of the "Winnipeg Free Press". Dr. Saunders wrote introductions to the New Canadian Library editions of Stead's "Grain" and Grove's "Settlers of the Marsh".

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The World We Share

BY CLARENCE TILLENIUS

THE NATURAL HISTORY OF CANADA

By R.D. Lawrence. Key Porter Books, Toronto, 1988. 303 pp., illus. $39.95.

A Canada goose wards off a skunk, from "The Natural History of Canada".

Ten years ago some friends sent me a book with an accompanying note: "Here is a different kind of naturalist".

Casually riffling through the book my attention was at once rivetted by one particular passage.

The author of the book was R.D. Lawrence and the episode that so struck me went essentially as follows: Lawrence had made his camp in a remote wilderness area, many days' canoe-paddling removed from any human settlement. One day, on impulse he lay down in the grass listening to the rustlings of movement around him and reflected that a small mammal, whose field of view was limited to these few inches above the ground, had as his only shield against danger what his ears and nose could interpret of these rustlings: he could not *see* approaching peril.

So impressed was Lawrence by this concept that he went back to this clearing by night and lay down in the same place, striving to interpret through his ears alone what the rustling sounds in the grass jungle around him might portend to the small grass-dwellers.

Not that Lawrence in any way imagined that a meadow mouse or chipmunk would necessarily share the emotional response of a human being in this situation, but since it was a place frequented by a pair of timber wolves and their whelps it is evident it required a special kind of dedication to lie prone in the grass when out of the dark night a hungry timber wolf might suddenly be standing over you.

However, this episode is only one of thousands that have made Lawrence the writer and nature student that he is: so when he undertakes a natural history of Canada the reader may be assured that his observations will be both fresh and provocative.

To cover so vast a subject as the total biology of half a continent in depth is obviously beyond the scope of a single book — or even fifty — but what Lawrence has done is to take in turn the varying multifaceted regions of this land, each with its unique characteristics, and by means of a provocative presentation of often very new discoveries, give each an exciting and thought-engendering twist.

His philosophy is set out briefly in the following words: "I was not long in drawing criticism from a number of establishment biologists. I have persisted because I feel that it is vital to the well-being of the world to simplify biology for those who need, and want, to be informed, but who cannot grasp the meanings concealed in the jargon-ridden scientific text and papers that are emerging in ever-increasing volume. *The Natural History of Canada* has therefore been written for the layperson".

In his summation towards the end of the book, Lawrence cites some alarming facts about the incessant rape of the globe's resources — vital to the continuation of human life on this planet — and follows with a frank appraisal of what (in view of humankind's past history) we humans might do about it if we were sufficiently jolted into awareness.

In this most interesting natural history, even a normally inattentive reader may find his or her interest piqued and quickened by some of the startling new discoveries made in the natural world which Lawrence here discusses.

For instance, there was the electrifying discovery in 1976 during

excavations on Ellesmere Island and Axel Heiberg Island, Canada's two islands nearest the North Pole, of fossil bones of alligators, tapirs, horses, rhinoceroses and tortoises. Not only were these discoveries (by Dr. Mary Dawson, curator of vertebrate fossils at the Carnegie Museum of Natural History in Pittsburgh and her colleague Dr. Robert M. West of the same museum) the first such made in the Canadian Arctic, but they were the first proof that the Arctic was once a tropic area. Following this the uncovering of the skull of a prehistoric flying lemur (close relatives now found on the island of Madagascar) and the stump of a prehistoric redwood tree which reached a height of 161 feet raises questions still unanswered, as does the presence of 18-inch sycamore leaves which Dr. Leo Hickey of the Peabody Museum in Yale believes must have grown in an area with continuous 24-hours-a-day sunlight. A 160-foot redwood tree growing 400 miles from the North Pole?

It is the presentation and discussion of such fascinating facts as these that makes Lawrence so inspiring a writer: the reader is fairly compelled to keep reading on, to see what new thoughts and speculations await him on the next page.

The choice of illustrations is commendable, with line-drawings, silhouettes, range maps, pastel renderings of grouped species by Nancy Gray Ogle. Especially good is the choice of photographs — all excellent and, with only one or two exceptions, very well reproduced.

There are a few (fortunately rare) ambiguities such as a caption on page 53 under a photo of a horned lark fledgling which says ". . . adult females of the species usually lay four eggs that hatch at intervals of from ten to fourteen days". This *seems* to indicate that there could possibly be a spread of a month and a half between the hatching of the first egg and the fourth, which hardly seems a satisfactory situation for the parent larks.

Again, on page 180 we find a statement, "The third major tree species of the Columbia biome is the western larch (*Larix occidentalis*) . . . . the trunk is slender and clear of branches for most of the length, a characteristic that in those places where the hemlock grows in pure stands, creates an understory . . ." Unless I have misunderstood the text, this seems to equate the western larch with the western hemlock (*Tsuga heterophylla*) which is described in a following paragraph.

However, I only mention these minor reservations because the writing is everywhere so vital, so incisive — and of course, my own interpretations of these descriptions may be at fault.

But in another section Lawrence has trenchant words. For many years, this reviewer has had a deep conviction that the most frightening thing facing the world today is the ever-growing human population: that if the legions of animals' rights activists, anti-abortionists, crusaders for world peace, ban-all-nuclear-devices marchers would temporarily abandon these lesser concerns and together confront this great and overwhelming peril, the over-running of the globe by human beings, the most ominous problem of this coming century might have some hope of solution.

Over population, Lawrence writes, would mean giant cities sprawling across the best land, overcrowding undreamed of to date by city planners, the great majority of all natural species extinct, and use of "natural" resources virtually ended.

Lawrence concludes: "We humans are natural organisms; if we reject our biological heritage (and the fundamental laws of nature that govern our bodies and a large part of our minds) we do so at our peril and without regard for future generations of our own kind or for the health of our world and its nature".

Surely, whoever reads this book with its wealth of striking photographs that show forth in all their splendid colouring the magnificence of this Canada we live in — its wildlife on land and sea, its forests, its prairies, its mountains, lakes and oceans, the sheer beauty and grandeur of this great continent — cannot listen unmoved to this eloquent appeal.

This reviewer is convinced that every thinking person who begins reading this book will keep it nearby to read again and again. Its message — absorbed and acted upon — could truly be world-altering.

Wildlife paintings by Clarence Tillenius are to be found in collections around the world.

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Read these and other fascinating articles in the June/July issue of *The Beaver.*

History for the Public

BY J.M. BUMSTED

Over the past few years, Canadian history has passed through a period of considerable flux. At the universities, history has ceased to be a preferred subject in which to major, as it was until around 1970, and Canadian history has declined with the discipline. If undergraduate and graduate student interest in specializing in the history of Canada has fallen off precipitously, students have continued to exhibit a willingness to learn something of the background of their country, enrolling in increasing numbers in survey courses. Many such students expect to be entertained as well as informed, a not surprising posture given the popularity of Canadian history with the general populace of the nation. That popularity is, by and large, not reflected in sales of research monographs by members of the academic community, although the response to the new Canadian Atlas indicates that academic approaches can sell, if they are properly packaged. The Book-of-the-Month Club (Canadian branch) regularly chooses works in Canadian history as its monthly selections, and there are several primetime television series based on our past in the planning stages. There is some evidence that even the academics have come to appreciate the presence of a deep-seated popular desire to know more about the history of Canada, if it can be made more accessible to the public.

Not everyone would agree on what becoming "accessible" involves for Canadian history, or whether accessibility is the major criterion of what comes increasingly to be called "popular history". It is far easier to define popular history in terms of what it is not — academic history — than what it is. Among those who write for the non-academic audience, there are a number of separate traditions. One comes from Canadian journalism, which explores themes of supposed national importance in a writing style often associated with *Maclean's* magazine. A second comes from academics attempting to become accessible by writing on topics of broad public interest with lots of pictures. Still another approach comes from the local or community historians. While the local people have long been around, their enterprise particularly has been transformed by the computer and the possibility of desktop publishing. Local history often numbers its sales in the hundreds rather than the thousands, its limited market is not the result of its methodology but of the number of individuals interested in Wildfire, Saskatchewan. Much local history achieves an incredible extent of saturation among those likely to care, demonstrating that sales figures are not necessarily the best measure of popularity. Given small production runs and the lack of enthusiasm of commercial publishers for such works, local history has usually been self-published, and the computer makes that approach even more viable.

Nowhere in Canada are local history and popular history more synonymous than on Prince Edward Island. Almost every Islander knows where his ancestors originated, when they first arrived on the Island, and where they settled. The fact that Prince Edward Island's historical development has been fairly insulated and isolated from the larger Canadian context, as well as largely ignored in books produced "away", has not discouraged Islanders, but rather spurred them on to identify their own past, which they regard as considerably different from that of the remainder of Canada. Writing and publishing Island history is a cottage industry on Prince Edward Island, and it is the only place I know in Canada where even tiny stores serving local cottage communities carry a rack of locally-produced history next to the postcards.

David Weale teaches history at the University of Prince Edward Island, but has long been in the forefront of the movement to make history both relevant and accessible to the larger audience on the Island. Together with Harry Baglole, Weale founded the Cornelius Howatt Society in the early 1970s, to honour the one Island MLA who had held out in 1873 against Confederation and to protest the way in which the centenary of Island confederation was being celebrated. In recent years Weale has hosted a series on local CBC radio presenting facets of the Island past to the listening audience. Weale and Baglole collaborate again on *A Stream out of Lebanon,* the first publication produced by the Institute of Island Studies under the editorship of the latter. Based on a lecture first given in 1983, Weale's somewhat esoteric subject has been given new prominence by the election of a member of the Island

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Lebanese community as premier of the province. It is no accident that the little boy whose face stares at the reader from the cover photograph is that of the young Joe Ghiz himself. Only fifty-seven pages long, profusely illustrated, and written without much reference to the larger literature of Canadian ethnic/immigration studies, this little book is prominently displayed in Island stores and is obviously intended to help bridge the gap between the academy and the larger reading public. In this it certainly succeeds, as Weale records the story of the arrival of a people who started as door-to-door pedlars, graduated into storekeeping, and almost against their will became Canadians.

In a similar vein we also have *Gaslights, Epidemics and Vagabond Cows,* subtitled "Charlottetown in the Victorian Era" and edited by two academics. While this work is considerably more substantial in length, the layout is generous with white space and there are many illustrations and insets. The ten chapters that make up its contents are a variable lot, providing neither complete coverage of the work's subtitle nor any consistent approach to the material. Editor Douglas Baldwin contributes four relatively scholarly chapters, one of which on the Charlottetown political elite makes a significant contribution to Canadian urban history and deserves to be widely read and reprinted. On the other hand, both the second and the last chapters, intended to frame the book by describing Charlottetown life in 1855 and 1914 respectively, resort to the device of fictional letters to deal with their subjects. Such fictionalization, as I shall argue subsequently in this essay at greater length, is a sure sign of a bankruptcy of historical imagination and insight. Charlottetown is not one of Canada's major cities, although it is the Island's largest urban centre. It has been the subject of very little historical writing either popular or scholarly, and this book is — despite its limitations — a welcome addition to a very small shelf of books.

The academy has its own agenda, and its criteria ought not to be

Paddy Nolan: Frontier lawyer.

applied to works of popular history. One of the problems with assessing such writings, of course, is the failure of authors to be clear about their intentions, as well as their tendency to invoke the paraphernalia of academic scholarship. The result is often a somewhat schizophrenic book, acceptable to neither the general audience nor the academic community. Something of that sense comes from Beth Hill's *Sappers: The Royal Engineers in British Columbia,* although the author does begin by insisting that this book is "not the definitive history of the Sappers and I trust it will not be judged as such", and both her illustrations and her final chapter, which describes modern sites in British Columbia associated with the royal engineers, suggest another audience. In the chapter on sites, again there is a disclaimer: "The list below is by no means complete, for a thorough record of the existing trails and roads is a subject for another book" (p. 145). Nonetheless, this book also contains footnotes and a lengthy bibliography. Perhaps more to the point, the reader wonders from first to last exactly why the book has been written, and what use readers are intended to make of it. A clear sense of purpose for a book is not merely a requirement of the academy, but one of importance to any potential reader.

How the author would describe a work on a fairly specialized subject that is not "definitive" is uncertain, but unfortunately, terms like "superficial" and "sketchy" come immediately to mind. Even if a work is relatively short and written in a "lively" prose style (the word is the publisher's, from the back dust

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A STREAM OUT OF LEBANON
An Introduction to the Coming of Syrian/Lebanese Emigrants to Prince Edward Island

By David Weale. Institute of Island Studies, Charlottetown, 1988. 57 pp., illus. $6.95.

GASLIGHTS, EPIDEMICS AND VAGABOND COWS
Charlottetown in the Victorian Era

Edited by Douglas Baldwin and Thomas Spira. Ragweed Press, Charlottetown, 1988. 207 pp., illus. $15.95.

SAPPERS
The Royal Engineers in British Columbia

By Beth Hill. Horsdal & Schubart Publishers Ltd., Ganges, B.C., 1987. 182 pp., illus. $9.95.

HE LEFT THEM LAUGHING WHEN HE SAID GOODBYE
The Life and Times of Frontier Lawyer Paddy Nolan

By Grant MacEwan. Western Producer Prairie Books, Saskatoon, 1987. 179 pp., illus. $12.95.

CONFESSIONS OF A CORNISH MINER
Silver Islet: 1870-1884

By James Strathbogey. Porphry Press, Thunder Bay, 1987. 195 pp., illus. $17.00.

WOMEN OF THE RAJ

By Margaret MacMillan. Thames and Hudson, New York, 1988. $27.95.

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jacket), the reader is entitled to expect some thoroughness of research. In fairness to the author, she has apparently looked at most of the relevant secondary material, and at some manuscript sources in the Public Archives of British Columbia, mainly of a personal nature. At the same time, the fundamental source for any unit of British army regulars is the War Office files in the Public Record Office in London, and while obtaining access to that material might require travel to England, without it what one gets is the sort of chatty reminiscences with which this book is filled. An approach that organized the existing material more deliberately and consistently around those historic sites might have made a better book. Perhaps the author will still write it.

Grant MacEwan is one of the doyens of popular history, especially in Western Canada. His production is prodigious, and if he does not singlehandedly support his publisher, Western Producer Prairie Books, he must be their most important author. MacEwan has written a number of useful and interesting popular treatments of important prairie themes and topics, and has in recent years experimented with a difficult genre, which for want of a better term one might label "Fictohistory". *He Left Them Laughing When He Said Goodbye: The Life and Times of Frontier Lawyer Paddy Nolan* is another foray into this approach. MacEwan is quite capable of doing extensive archival research, and the problem with Calgary attorney Patrick James Nolan is that there simply is not much in the historical record, perhaps enough for a brief sketch in the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* but hardly enough for a full-scale biography. Some biographers resolve the problem of the shortage of documentary evidence by extensive contextual research, which in this case would have produced a detailed account of early Calgary, into which the few known facts about Paddy Nolan would have been located. Such writing fits into the "there must have been" school of history, in which the behaviour of the subject is deduced, as it were, from the context and the few known facts.

MacEwan has not, to his credit, taken such an approach. Instead, he has imagined what Paddy Nolan might have said and done in particular circumstances that might or might not have happened, creating conversations and situations as he goes along. This solution to the problem of gaps in the historical record is an interesting one, if essentially unhistorical. If the documents do not provide sufficient information, the author can simply invent it. The problem with such an approach, of course, is that fact becomes indistinguishable from fiction, and this work has no right to be catalogued — as it has been with the assistance of its publishers — as biography. Although it has its basis in fact, the text is largely invention.

Fiction-history is terribly appealing to historians who become frustrated by the absence of adequate documentary evidence on pet subjects. It also pulls those who find the historical record insufficiently dramatic or compelling. Which of these explanations applies to the writer who, under the pseudonym of James Strathbogey has produced *Confessions of a Cornish Miner: Silver Islet: 1870–1884* is an open question. The publisher claims that the book derives from the letters of William B. Frue, mine captain and manager at Silver Islet, and the work itself begins with the following "Editor's Note":

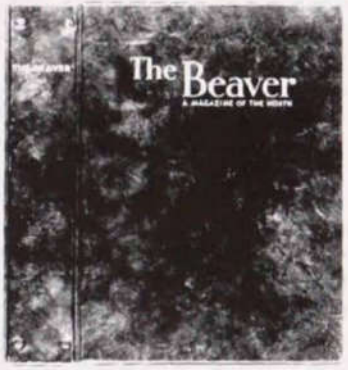
> While *Confessions of a Cornish Miner* is obviously based closely on actuality, certain names and incidents are fictional, or at best unsubstantiated hearsay. And while extant documents such as W. B. Frue's letter books corroborate dates and technical data, no claim is made or implied as to the authenticity of specific events or character portrayals.

What follows are nearly 200 pages of fictionalized journal by young James Strathbogey, covering the operations of the mine at Silver Islet. As a literary device with its roots in the formative period of the novel, such a journal has distinguished antecedents. Unfortunately, its author lacks the skills of Daniel Defoe or Tobias Smollett, and the result is a piece of fiction of extremely specialized interest. Perhaps he would have been better off reprinting the letters of Mr. Frue, which at least would have provided some "actuality" for further historical study.

The final book considered here was not sent to *The Beaver* for review, its publisher no doubt feeling that *Women of the Raj* was a bit outside the normal purview of this journal. This reviewer got a copy by a very unorthodox means for one of his ilk: purchase. Actually, Margaret MacMillan's book has considerable Canadian interest at a variety of levels. Its author teaches history at Ryerson Polytechnic Institute in Toronto, and one of the major female novelists of the Raj was a Canadian, Sara Jeannette Duncan, who married an Englishman serving in the Indian civil

Preserve

Our History



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service. On a more profound level, there are striking parallels and contrasts between the Raj in India and the Hudson's Bay Company regime in Western Canada, particularly in their attitudes toward native peoples and towards mixed bloods. Of course, the East India Company, out of whose imperialism came the later Raj, sprang from the same commercial quest for overseas profits that brought us the HBC. MacMillan does not draw these parallels, and Canadian historians do not often compare our history with that of other parts of the British Empire, either the settlement parts such as Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa or the nonsettlement parts such as India. Nor do most Canadian authors and readers.

If there is one common characteristic of most of the works discussed in this review, it is the limited perspective of their authors, who seem unwilling (or unable) to illuminate their subjects by any reference to happenings outside their immediate purview. The academy has long debated the question of internationalism versus Canadian parochialism, and by and large those who have insisted that Canada is scarcely worth the attention devoted by Canadian specialists have lost that argument, at least in practical terms. But if Canada *is* worth studying, it would be useful if those who do so could be a little more broad-ranging in their understanding of context.

But I have come to praise MacMillan, not to ignore her. What is really important about *Women of the Raj*, it seems to me, is that it offers a splendid model of how to write history in a way that mixes the thoroughness of the academy with the accessibility of the popularist. A truly vast gulf exists between this book and the works discussed above. MacMillan does not patronize her reader through simplification of complex issues or by the scope of her research. She does not attempt to jazz things up by fictionalizing her material, or even by over-reliance on a vast store of existing fiction for illustrative material. The research base is thorough, if not exhaustive. The author's command of her subject is unquestionable, and her judgement about anecdotes is impeccable. It is true that MacMillan makes some concessions to a non-academic audience. There is no mention of historiography or controversies among academics in these pages, and there are a number of wonderful illustrations (fifty-seven in all). The most striking illustration is a photograph, taken sometime before World War I, of a young British couple sitting in their garden, looking away from the camera with eyes downcast, the overall impression of their entire demeanour one of total ennui mixed with hopelessness. Well-chosen illustrations do help. But mainly, the author communicates with her audience by presenting her material in clear, clean prose carefully organized into

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topics. *Women of the Raj* is not overburdened with a thesis or a particular interpretation, its author content to argue that the job of women in India — to support their menfolk and replicate British society under difficult conditions — was not easy to achieve. Mainly she writes about how memsahibs lived and got on with their lives. The bias of the book is toward the elite, and Indians themselves are shadowy figures, but it was as an elite that paid not much attention to the natives that the Raj thought of itself — when it thought of itself at all. In any case, this book is the find of the season and should not be missed. If someone chooses to imitate it on a Canadian topic, so much the better.

J.M. Bumsted teaches history at St. John's College, University of Manitoba.
He is the author of "Land, Settlement and Politics of Eighteenth Century Prince Edward Island", McGill-Queen's University Press, 1987, for which he won the 1987 J.W. Dafoe Foundation Prize.

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THE PACKET

Letters, Notes and Opinion

The Ancient Path

In the late summer of 1690 a gunboat under the command of an intrepid seaman from Longueuil, Quebec, named Pierre Le Moyne d'Iberville sailed into the estuary of the Severn River, bent on capturing a Hudson's Bay Company trading post situated a short distance upstream. At the time all the former Company posts on James Bay were in French hands, thanks in large measure to the daring and brilliant strategy of Iberville in earlier raiding expeditions, and now, newly-appointed as Governor of the Bay posts of the Compagnie du Nord, his mission was to capture the two remaining under English control on Hudson Bay, York Fort at the mouth of the Hayes River, and its outpost New Severn.

But of New Severn, Iberville found little more than ashes. The Company master at York 300 kilometres to the west, guessing that the raider would try for the lesser prize of Severn after being thwarted in an attempt on his own post, sent an Indian boy hot-footing it along the Hudson Bay coast carrying a message of warning. The boy outran the man-of-war and its two consorts, giving Thomas Walsh, the master at Severn, time to blow up and burn his indefensible establishment. He and his men then fled overland, retracing the Indian lad's footsteps to York.

Their route was what the Coastal Cree today refer to as *kayash miskinow*, the ancient path. Whether it was already being travelled by natives when the fur traders first came is not known. But for two centuries the Hudson's Bay Company used the trail, which parallels the shores of Hudson and James Bays approximately at the tree-line and takes advantage wherever possible of firm footing provided by stranded gravel beaches, for communicating between its widely spaced Bayside posts. Travel on the shallow and exposed sea was practicable only by sloop or ship, and then only in the ice-free season of late summer and autumn. Regular "packets", despatches of letters, reports and instructions, plus occasionally small quantities of trade goods or necessities, passed up and down the coast on the backs of young Company servants or Indians. But it was those special errands that got the most notice in traders' journals, and intrigue us today.

Another such was run by young William Tomison, who later in his career would be a leader in the Hudson's Bay Company's advance into the interior to meet and ultimately absorb the competing North West Company. With the Severn River already frozen and his sloop not yet back from an expedition to Moose Factory, on 29 October 1770 the master at Severn sent Tomison and an Indian to look for it. Eighteen days later they were at Fort Albany, somewhat over 500 kilometres down the coast, where they learned the sloop had been forced by prevailing north winds to winter at Moose. They did not get home until after Christmas. Their return journey seems to have taken a long time, but perhaps the adventuresome Tomison preferred life on the trail to that within the stockade of a coastal trading post.

The most frequent users of the coastal trail were of course the

natives of the region, the Coastal Crees. The narrow belt of tundra squeezed between sea and muskeg which it followed was a natural highway between river mouth settlements and camps. Its regular use ceased only about half a century ago, with the advent of sea-going freighter canoes equipped with outboard motors, and aeroplanes. Before that entire families, walking always in single file, used it to reach distant hunting and fishing grounds, and to visit relatives, attend religious services and draw annual treaty payments. Joseph Sutherland, a man now in his seventies if not older, recently told me of making the 350 kilometre round-trip to Weenusk to buy shotgun shells when the Hudson's Bay Company store in his home village of Fort Severn ran out. He slept at night under a piece of canvas, and shot ptarmigan and ducks to eat.

In comparatively modern times another Severn Cree, Phillip Mathew, duplicated the trip of the boy who carried the message to Thomas Walsh in 1690. Only this time the mission was not quite so urgent; Phillip, who played handed-down versions of Old Country reels and jigs on a violin which also wore a handed-down look, hiked all that way with his instrument in a canvas bag slung from his shoulder just to play for a Treaty Day dance. In the early 1950s, as a young employee of Ontario's Wildlife Branch, I walked parts of the ancient path behind Phillip. Long-legged and leaning at a thirty-degree angle toward whatever our distant objective happened to be, his normal walking stride equalled mine at a lope. The jaunt to York Factory, when he was a bit younger, would have been a breeze for him. But I have to report the lasses of both York and Severn misplayed their cards, for this bashful, pleasant fellow and superb hunter remained unmarried all his life (he died last winter), living alone much of the time at his muskeg camp on the Niskibi River.

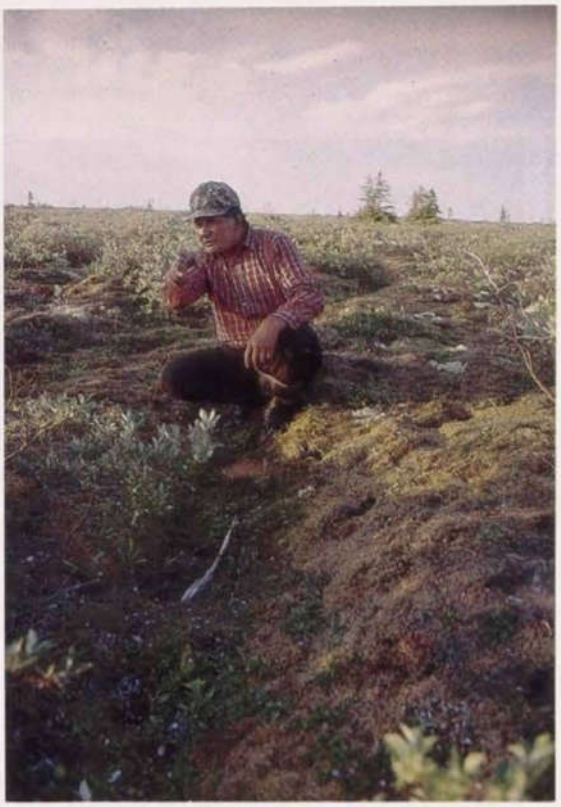

Photo by Heather Bickle

John Koostachin squats in the trench of the old coastal trail east of the Winisk River.

It was the son of another former travelling companion of mine who last summer took photographer Heather Bickle and me to view the old thoroughfare as it looks today. John George Koostachin, with whose father Moses I journeyed inland by dogteam from Weenusk to the head of the Sutton River in February 1955, bundled us aboard his fat-tired all-terrain vehicle to bounce and wallow among rising godwits and white puffs of cotton grass to a spot east of the Winisk River which he judged to be suitably photogenic. Standing thigh-deep in the sunken pathway for pictures, John George recalled passing the spot as a child, trudging in the footsteps of his mother who carried a pail of coals into which she periodically dropped tufts of grass to make a smudge to ward off mosquitoes. And he repeated a story, heard from his grandmother, about an entire family who perished when caught by the incoming tide as they forded the shallows where the trail crossed the estuary of the Winisk.

As John George turned his vehicle for the return journey its engine died and seemed unlikely ever to start again, so Heather and I began the long trudge back across the spongy tundra. I kept thinking as we marched toward the rapidly setting sun that Moses Koostachin's dogs never would have let us down like this.

But as in any good adventure story, relief came in the nick of time. After removing the fuel pump and fiddling with it, John George revived his vehicle and overtook us just as darkness clothed the plain and Heather began inquiring timorously about the habits of polar bears. By that time our dragging footsteps had freshened the fading trace of a good three miles of the ancient coastal path.

John Macfie,
Parry Sound, Ontario.

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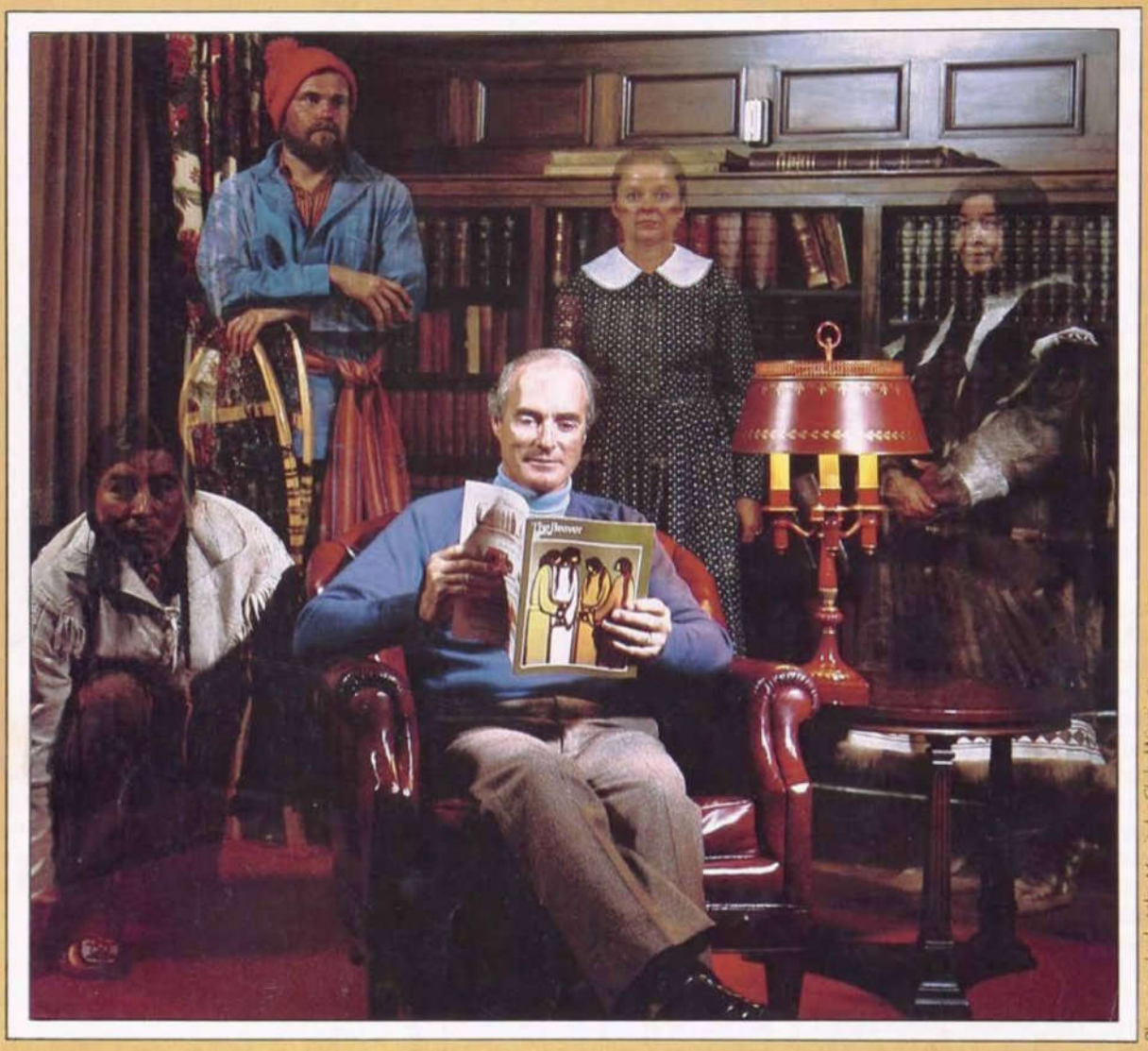

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